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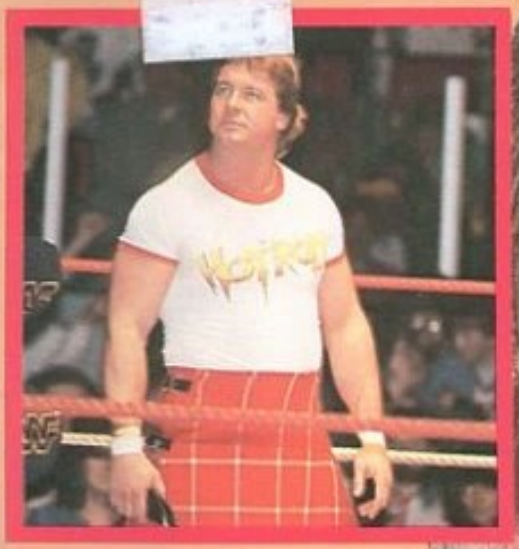
1990 ALL STAR COLOR CALENDAR!

THE HISTORY OF THE NWA



WWF: STILL #1

EAST MEETS WEST: STING VS MUTA

COLOR PIN UPS!!! THE WARLORD, CURT HENNIG, HERCULES, STING, CHRIS ADAMS, MIKE ROTUNDO

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SOMETIMES, BAD IS GOOD.

WOMEN OF WRESTLING

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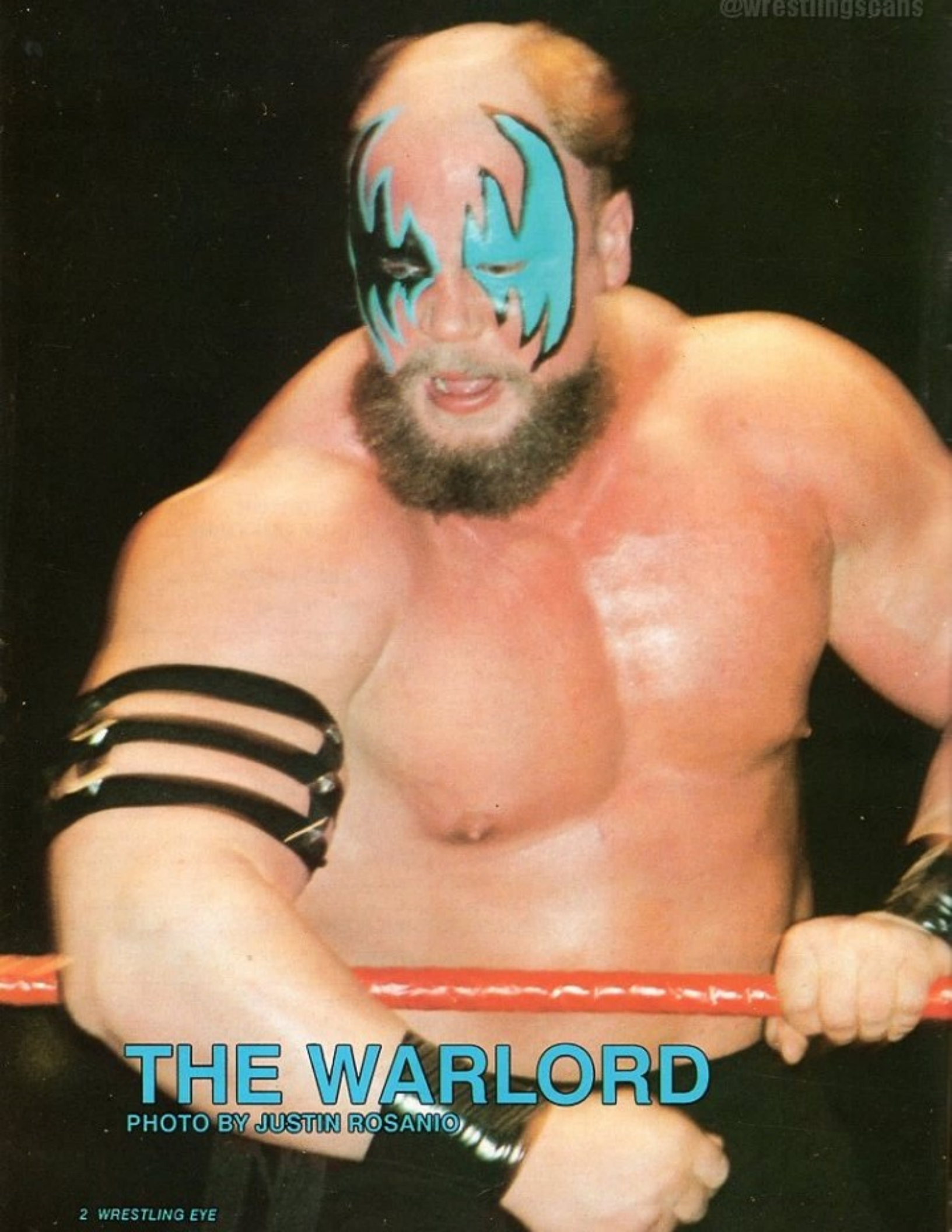

THE WARLORD

PHOTO BY JUSTIN ROSANIO

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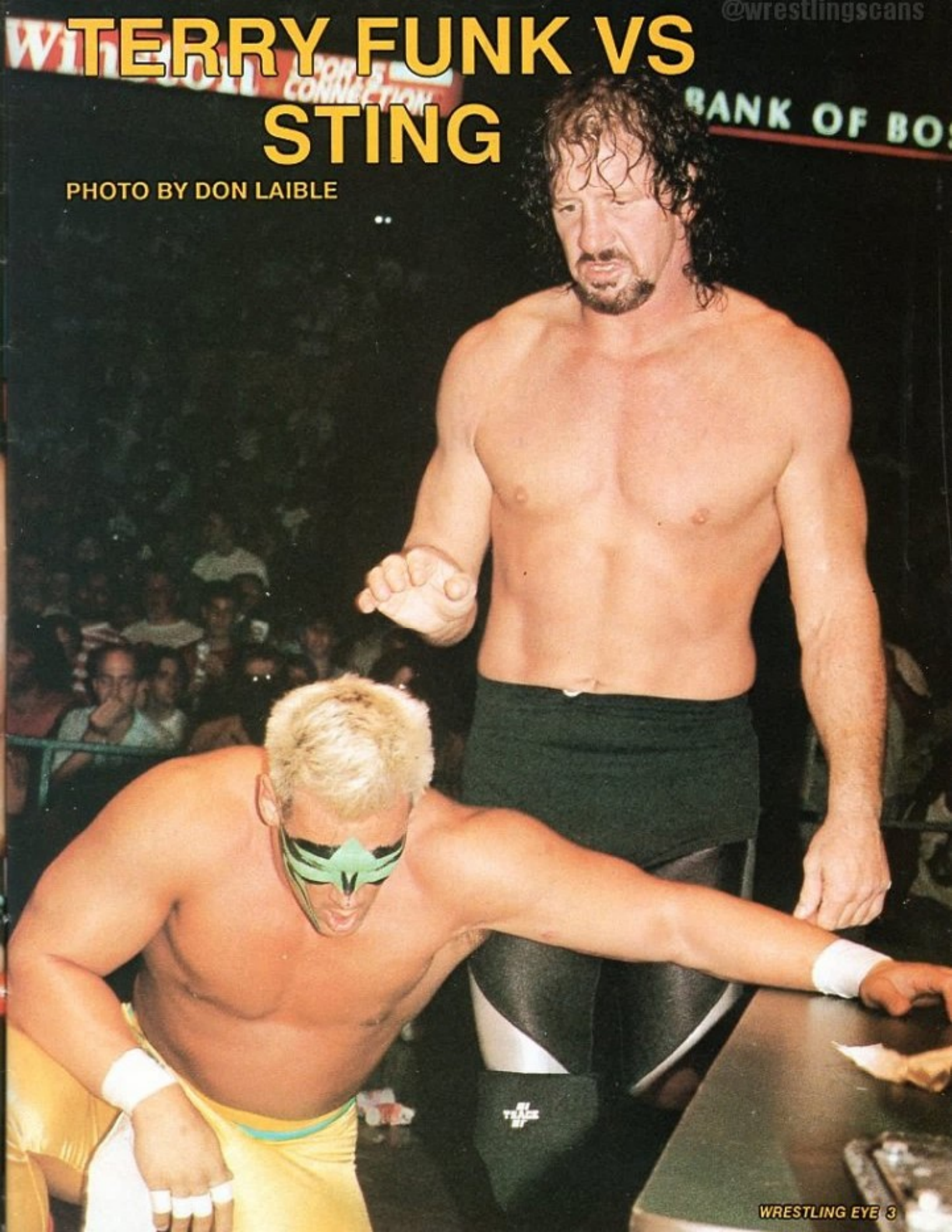
TERRY FUNK VS STING

PHOTO BY DON LAIBLE



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DINO BRAVO

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From the Editor's Desk....

THE WWF- THE BEST

Whether you love them or hate them, no one can deny that they are the best promotion going today. The W.W.F's superstar roster reads like a who's who in wrestling, from Hogan to Savage to Snuka, Piper and Rhodes the W.W.F's list of stars just keeps getting bigger.

The W.W.F. is regarded in the television business as "pioneers" in the field of broadcasting. Their television product is more advanced than Monday Night Football, not to mention the N.W.A.!

The W.W.F. can also be seen in more markets than any other wrestling promotion in the entire world. No one can deny that they are larger and more advanced than any of their competitors. Although, there are some people that feel otherwise. They agree to all of the above accolades but say that the W.W.F's use of gimmickry and showmanship is nothing but a higher form of a carnival act.

All of these points may be true, but if it weren't for all of the W.W.F. eccentricities ol' Hubie wouldn't have a job.

Obnoxiously Yours,

Hubie Marx
Editor-in-Chief

No matter what federation, Curt Hennig can REALLY wrestle!

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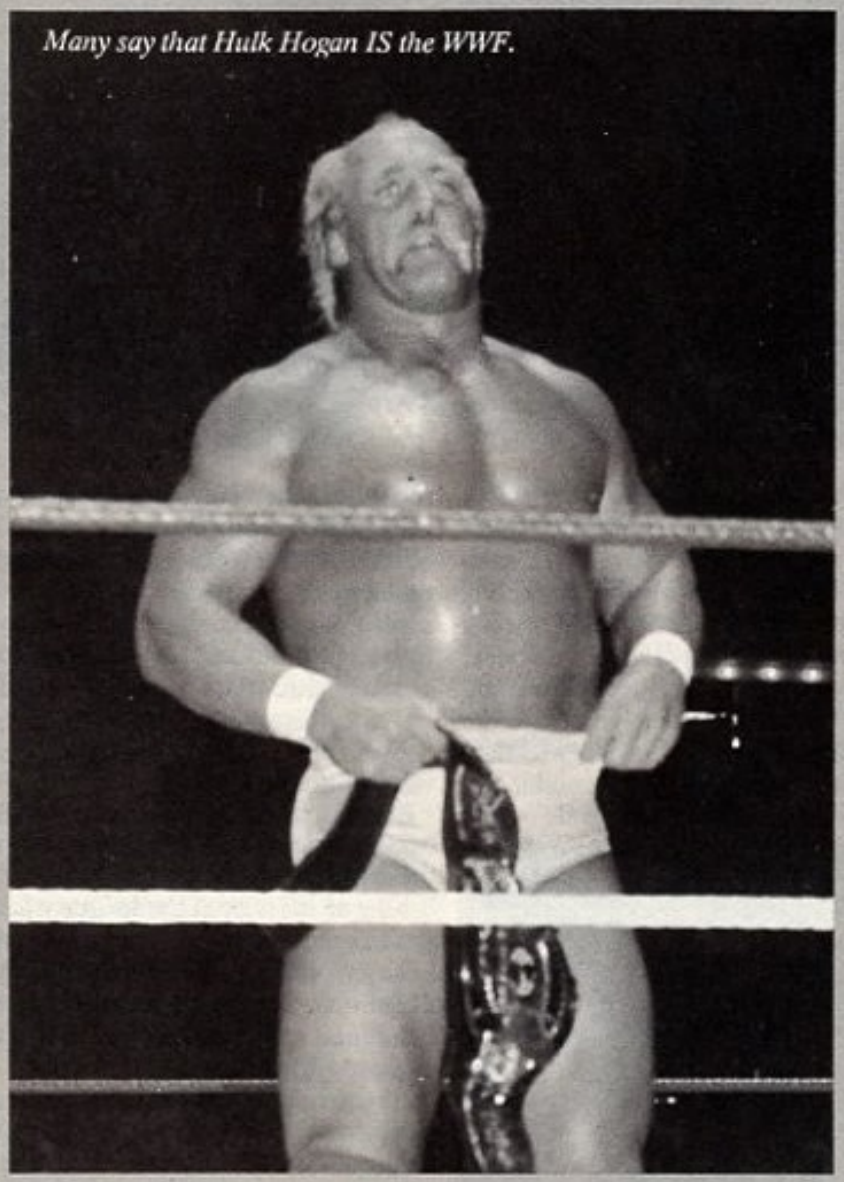
THE WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

STILL #1 AFTER ALL THESE YEARS!

BY STEVE MUELLER



Many say that Hulk Hogan IS the WWF.

And the wrestling world turns...slowly. Some things change. Some don't. The WWF has long been the subject of savage criticism by both wrestling fans and the media. That isn't likely to change, although maybe it should. It seems that those who criticize the WWF most severely are also in the habit of praising the NWA, you know, the place where "We Wrestle". Maybe that should change as well.

That hard core "smart" fan who condemns the WWF as a traveling sideshow filled with pets, bad singers and feeble steroid mutants, usually has a handy list of the WWF's faults. The WWF does nothing to develop the art of wrestling. The work rate of Titan wrestlers is awful. There are few exciting high spots in WWF wrestling. And so on. Many of these observations are true but the vast majority of wrestling fans have little interest in the esoteric elements of the sport. The hordes of fans filling Titan house shows have different priorities. They are the casual fans who merely want to be entertained. And entertain is what the WWF does best.

Casual fans consider a trip to the local arena a night of fun, not an opportunity to study the latest developments in wrestling technique. The Titan Sports braintrust realizes that these fans would rather watch Hulk Hogan battle a cartoon character than follow the intricacies of a Flair-Steamboat match. Consequently, the WWF promotional angles are focused precisely to appeal to these casual fans, who, incidentally, comprise the largest target market available.

The WWF attacks its target market like a veteran quarterback picking apart a deep zone. Titan Sports personalizes its mass marketing techniques with interviews designed for specific areas. For instance, the Boston edition of "Superstars" will feature interviews with the wrestlers talking about their upcoming matches at the Boston Garden. As a result, fans are given a sense of immediacy, a feeling that the main event at their local arena is going to be the match that settles the hot feud once and for all. Of course, this is not always true, but it is a masterful illusion, and illusion is what wrestling is all about.

Another marketing technique utilized by Titan Sports is the maintenance of a recognizable WWF personality. When fans go to a WWF event, they know what to expect and they get it: outlandish characters engaged in a soap opera-like mini-drama. WWF characters are developed slowly, week by week. Their personality traits are constantly reinforced, until the most casual fan can easily recognize them. Even if the characters are degrading like the Red

The Ultimate Warrior really hit the big time.

Rooster, or simply silly like the Honky Tonk Man, or even pathetic like Andre the Giant, their recognizable persona make them marketable commodities.

The WWF has used these basic strategies so successfully that when the casual fan thinks of pro wrestling, he thinks of the WWF. The WWF is pro wrestling's major league in the same way that the NFL is pro football's. Just ask the USFL, or if you're talking wrestling, ask the NWA.

The NWA, since its takeover by Ted Turner in January of 1989, is trying to become the alternative to the WWF. Unfortunately, while it has managed to win over some hard core fans who favor watching competent grapplers execute the technical aspects of the sport, it has not yet become part of mainstream America's perception of just what is major league in the mat sport. There are many reasons for this.

Perhaps foremost is the NWA's lack of a real identity. It claims to be the place where, you know, "We Wrestle", but it has also become the place where "We Do Weird Skits". The idea of offering an alternative to the WWF soap opera side show is a valid marketing concept. Japan's Universal Wrestling Federation did just that then it designed a wrestling promotion and match philosophy that returned the sport to the basics - having wrestlers exchange holds instead of insults and pets. The UWF regularly sells out its shows. If the NWA had stuck to its original marketing concept and attacked the WWF at its weakest point, the quality of its matches, it too might be selling out arenas. Instead, it sold out only its promotional philosophy and its original identity concept. In the process, it is also losing the support of those hard core fans who want pure wrestling action.

Jimmy Hart has been a WWF mainstay.

Early in 1989, the NWA was indeed becoming the quality alternative to the WWF sideshow. It was establishing an identity as the league where wrestling technique was the main priority. Quality matches like Flair-Steamboat and Luger-Windham headlined cards. NWA announcers were essentially saying, "Fans, if you're tired of the WWF circus, watch us instead! We're what wrestling is supposed to be!" Then, as if overcome by a rampaging self-destructive impulse, the NWA booking team of the moment introduced Norman the Lunatic, a WWF-style cartoon character, and the Ding Dongs, perhaps the stupidest wrestling creation of all time. The NWA's descent into

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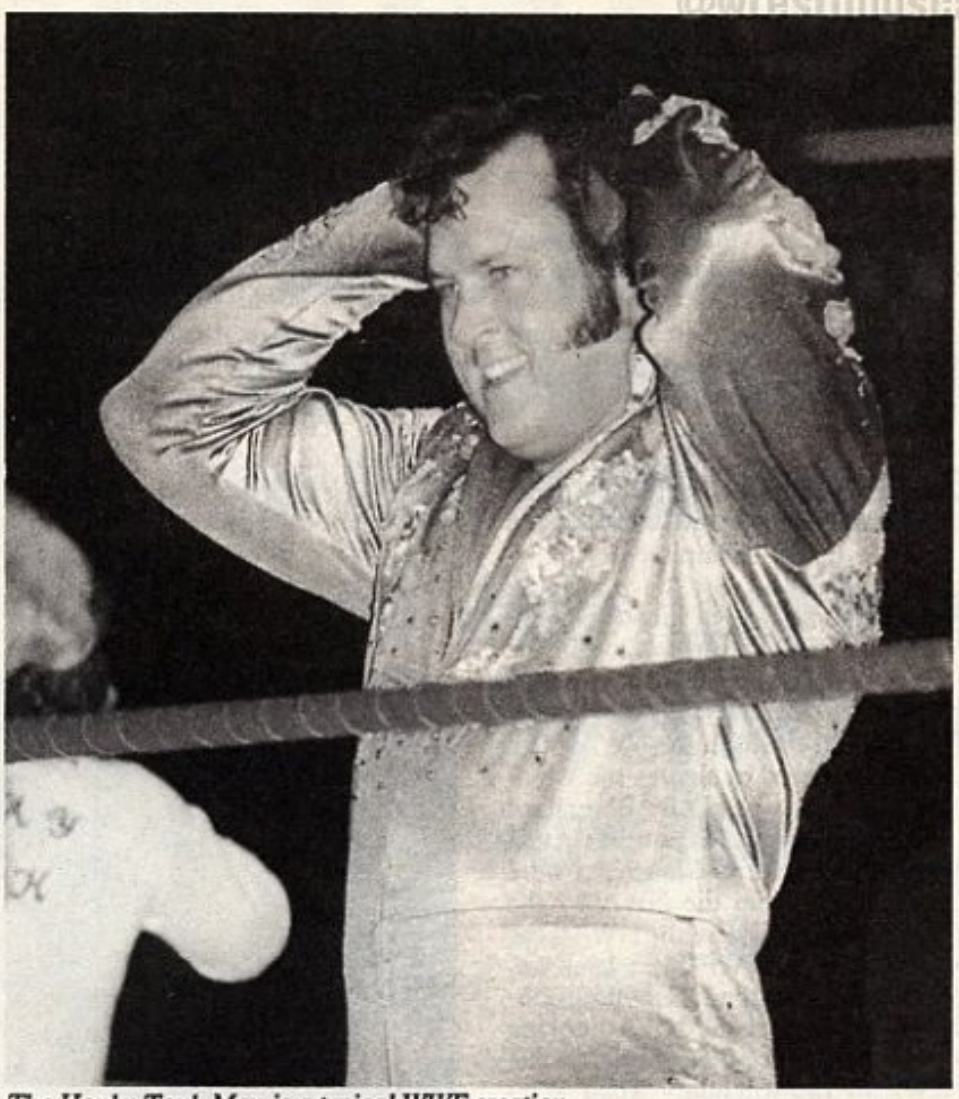
the abyss of lost promotions began. Norman is supposed to be a released mental patient who is controlled by Teddy Long with a set of keys that are alleged to be the keys to his asylum cell. The Ding Dongs are two skinny masked men who ring bells during their matches and wear little bells glued to their wrestling tights. The NWA has yet to explain how "they wrestle" with all the little bells falling off during a match.

The descent into the abyss gained speed over the summer when the focus on quality matches was replaced with angles such as the Terry Funk "garbage bag" attack on Ric Flair, and the Robin Green saga that featured a video-taped mugging. In late October, the NWA destroyed any hope that it would ever become pro wrestling's quality alternative with its "Halloween Havoc" pay-per-view show. The NWA, on this grim and ghoulish night, featured an electrified steel cage as its main attraction. The WWF, even at its worst, never stooped to such grotesque silliness. On this night, the NWA became the place where, you know, "We Electrocute Our Wrestlers".

Along with this failure to maintain an identifiable promotional philosophy, the NWA committed a major marketing blunder by orchestrating too many heel/face turns in too short a time. As a result, the persona of many NWA wrestlers have become blurred. Ric Flair, Ron Simmons, the Midnight Express, Barry Windham, Kendall Windham, Steve Williams, Mike Rotundo and Jim Cornette were just a few examples of about-face changes made in 1989. Even Kevin Sullivan's latest NWA tenure began with him as a face praising Dusty Rhodes' wrestling ability. Then, there is the NWA "circle turn". Lex Luger, even though he has become a classic heel, is the obvious example of this booking angle. He was bad, then he was good, and now he's bad again. "When will he be good again and who really cares?" is what the casual fan has to be wondering. The Road Warriors underwent the quickest circle turn in mat history. It lasted about three weeks.

Steve Williams was turned into a member of Kevin Sullivan's Varsity Club for a few months and when he returned from a tour of Japan, he was suddenly a face again with little explanation as to how his soul was saved.



The Honky Tonk Man is a typical WWF creation.

Identities that change too often, cause the entire promotion to be perceived as a blur. A wrestling promotion without recognizable characters is a marketing disaster.

The NWA also failed miserably when they couldn't re-sign Ricky Steamboat. Steamboat is one of the sport's best workers and ring technicians. His presence and his matches gave credibility to the NWA's claim as the quality wrestling alternative. The fact that he vanished in the middle of a series of matches with Lex Luger, which were becoming mat classics, only complicated this disaster.

Perhaps the recent decline in the NWA's promotional strategy is the emergence of Ric Flair as the chief booker. Insiders are whispering that the Flair regime is reminiscent of the Dusty Rhodes booking regime at its worst. Friends are pushed despite talent and deserving potentials are ignored. Consider Eddie Gilbert, a genuine talent and innovative performer. The Flair regime has relegated Gilbert, a former focal

Did Terry Taylor make a mistake by becoming the Red Rooster?

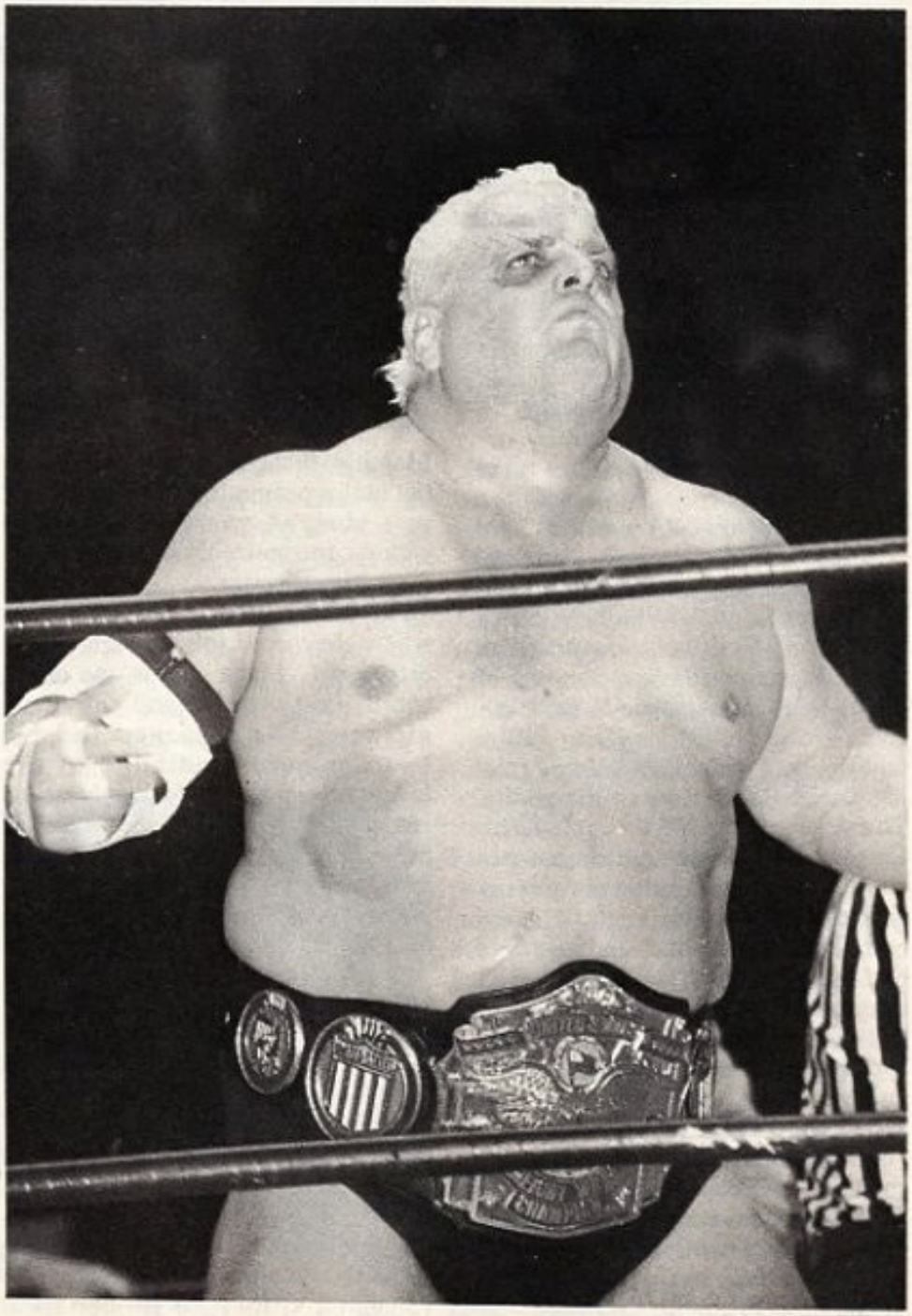
figure in mid-level angles, to opening losses against pushed talent like Brian Pillman. And worse, Gilbert has lost his identity. He is no longer "Hot Stuff" and he is neither a face nor a heel. He has become a wrestling twilight zoner. Is this because he was once part of the booking team and the new chief booker is worried about competition? Ric Flair has not only become the chief booker, but the promotion's most pushed face. Remind you of anyone? To be fair to Flair, the job of chief booker is just too complicated to be done by someone who is also an active wrestler, and in this case, the champion as well.

To add to the NWA's problems, rumors of a massive talent war are rampant. This latest episode in the NWA/WWF war is said to have begun when the WWF signed Barry Windham away from the NWA. The NWA retaliated by signing the WWF tag team champs, Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson to contracts. LAst year Anderson and Blanchard were signed away from the NWA by the WWF when they were the NWA's tag champs. The WWF fired back immediately by sending J.J. Dillon, once a key member of the NWA booking team, to negotiate a move to the WWF by the legendary Road Warriors. A Road Warrior move to the WWF is reportedly ready to happen. So too is a move by Sting. If these moves do occur, the NWA's decline may be irreversible. The casual fan already suspects that the NWA is a minor league, where talent develops and then moves on to the major league, the WWF. The loss of wrestlers like Sting and the Road Warriors would only confirm this suspicion.

The NWA has to sign some WWF stars to change this perception, and signing fading WWF stars wouldn't help. The NWA would then be perceived as merely a dumping ground for washed-up WWF performers To some degree, this perception already exists because of the NWA's signing of former WWF wrestlers like the Junkyard Dog, the Iron Sheik, Bob Orton and Butch Reed.

Coincidentally, the WWF, for various reasons, is undergoing a restructuring of talent. Already, or soon to be history are the Honky Tonk Man, who has already signed contracts with some small independent promotions, Koko B. Ware, who was fired because of an altercation with an official during a European tour in October, the Rougeau Brothers, who are reportedly just fed up with their image and their life in the WWF, the Hart Foundation, who are rumored to be negotiating with the NWA, and the Red Rooster Terry Taylor who has ripped up both his knee and his ego. Some of these wrestlers will go to the NWA, but they aren't the types whose signing would be a major promotional coup. The NWA, if it is to begin changing the perception that it is not merely a regional promotional with delusions of grandeur, has to sign a major WWF star and there is virtually no chance of that happening. Hulk Hogan, Randy Savage, Roddy Piper and the Ultimate Warrior are going nowhere unless...Yes, there is one more important development going on behind the scenes.

The ultimate badguy, the manic manipulator of corporate America's worst nightmare is about to unleash a frontal assault on the WWF. The biggest specter of dread, even bigger than Andre is about to put Titan Sports in a headlock. Vinceland is about to be audited by the IRS. And with that audit comes some rumblings by some WWF stars. "What happens if the books don't balance? Do I still get my dough? Yo, what's the number of that guy in the NWA booking office?" Stay tuned. The fun may just be beginning.



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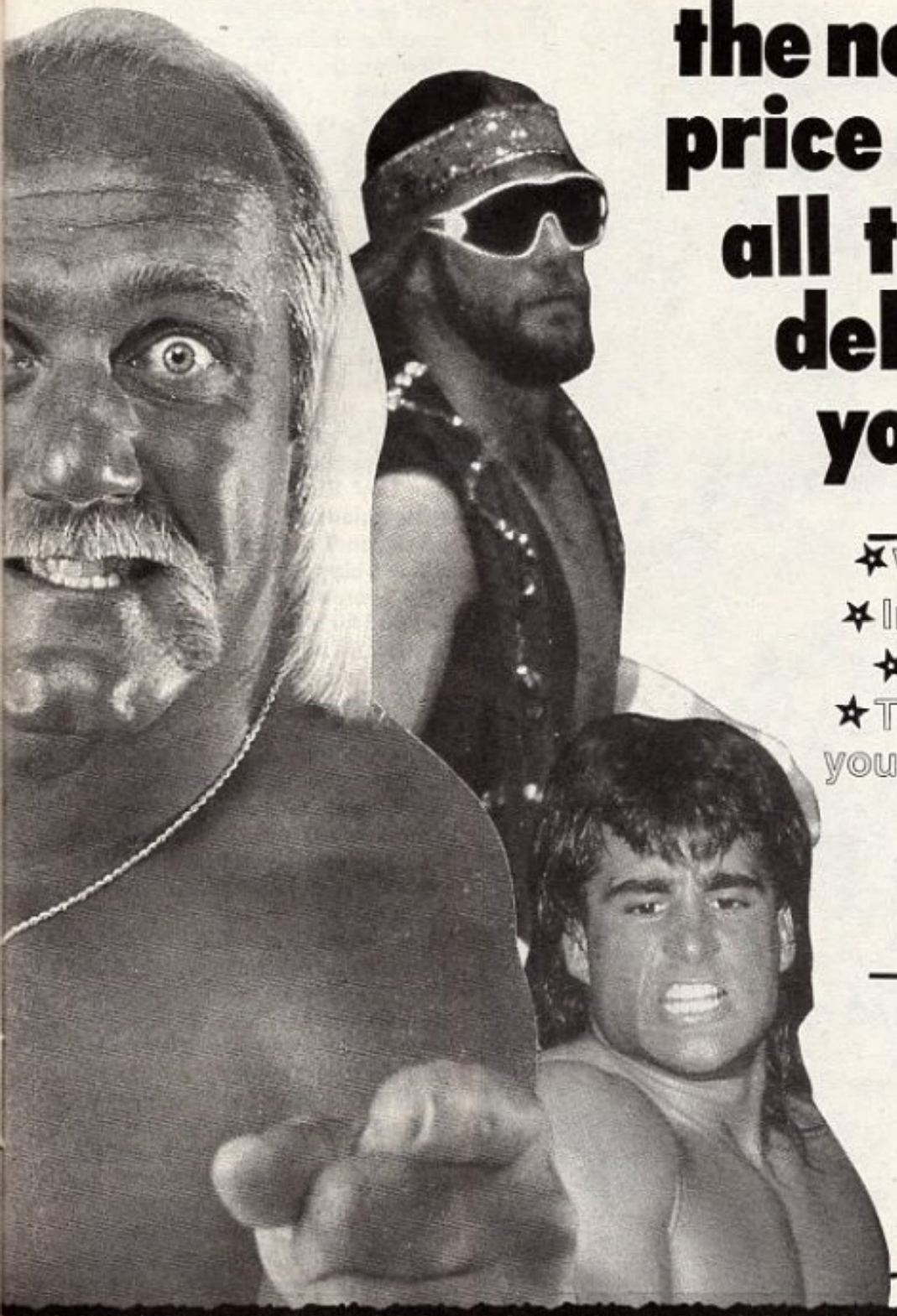

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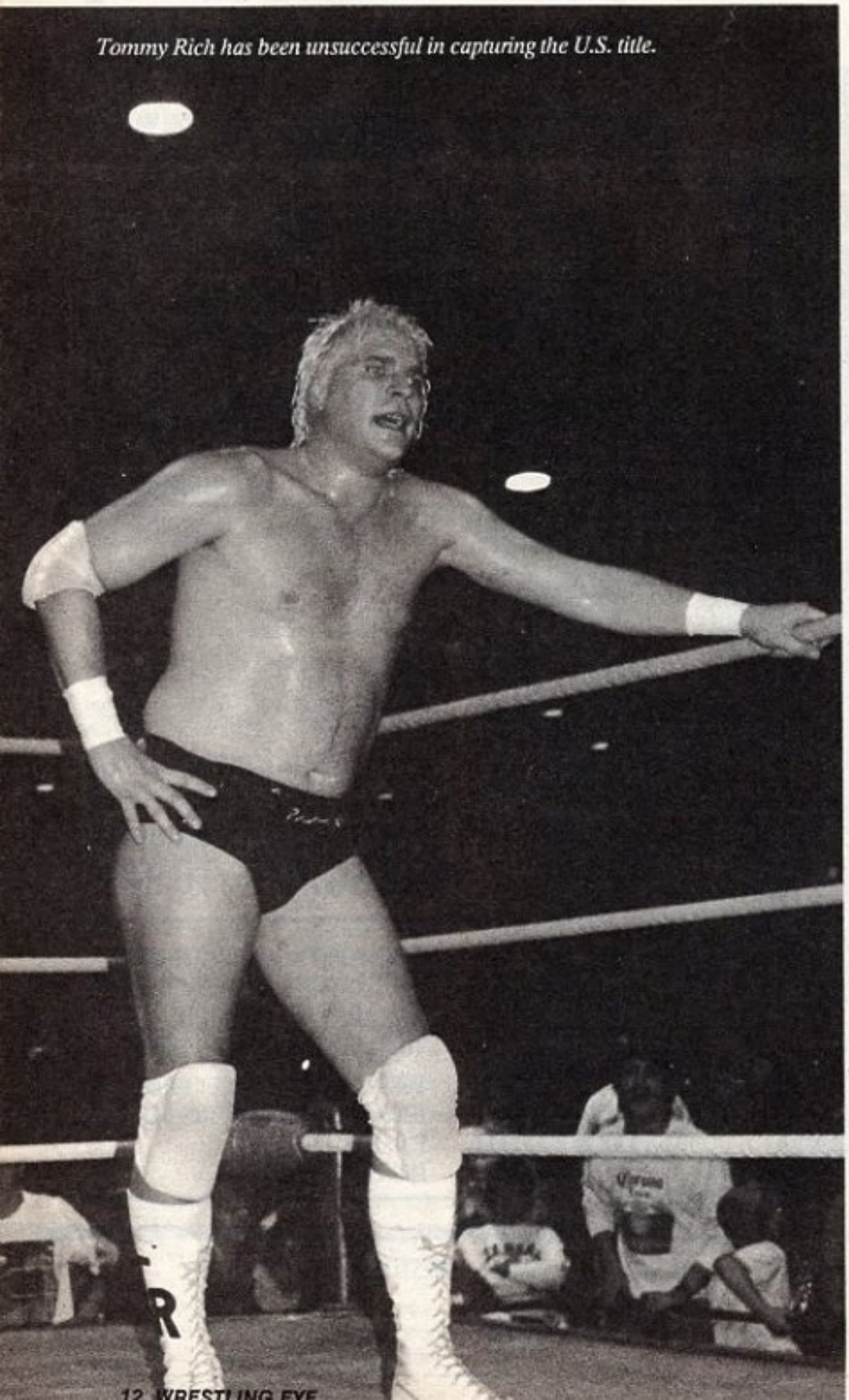
FIERCE FEUD!!!

LEX LUGER TAKES ON TOMMY RICH

BY DON LAIBLE



Tommy Rich has been unsuccessful in capturing the U.S. title.

Whoever said they wouldn't be interesting challengers are now eating their words. Their matches have turned out better than many so called experts had predicted. They are approaching each other one day at a time, and match by match. Both Tommy "Wildfire" Rich and "The Total Package" Lex Luger are chasing goals each feel to be vital to their immediate future in the National Wrestling Alliance. The stubborness and bitter brawling tactics displayed during their encounters reflects the determination each wrestler has to become the overall victor in their feud. Not only securing a championship showdown with NWA titlest "Nature Boy" Ric Flair is on Luger and Rich's minds, but stripping him of his prestigious belt is their ultimate goal. It's not easy getting to the champ.. Top contenders are continuously lined up for a crack at his belt. For a wrestler to not only catch, but hold the championship committee's attention for consideration in going against Flair, they not only have to defeat a respected athlete, but be victorious on a continuous basis. Both of these men are well aware of this situation. The battles between Luger and Rich were proven to be the best kept secret and most pleasant surprise in 1989 for the NWA.

It is rather obvious looking at both men they are different as night and day. Their ring philosophies lead them to wins over many of the sports largest draws. Until the NWA belt is put around their waist, neither "Wildfire" or "The Total Package" will rest. Luger is determined to take Flair's title since entering the NWA five years ago. He has come closer than any other challenger to defeat "Nature Boy" without actually exiting the "squared circle" with the belt. The NWA Tag Team title (with Barry Windham as his partner) and the U.S. Heavyweight Championship are among the trophies Luger has claimed. Two years ago, combining forces with Sting, the duo won the Crockett Cup Memorial Tag Team Tournament.

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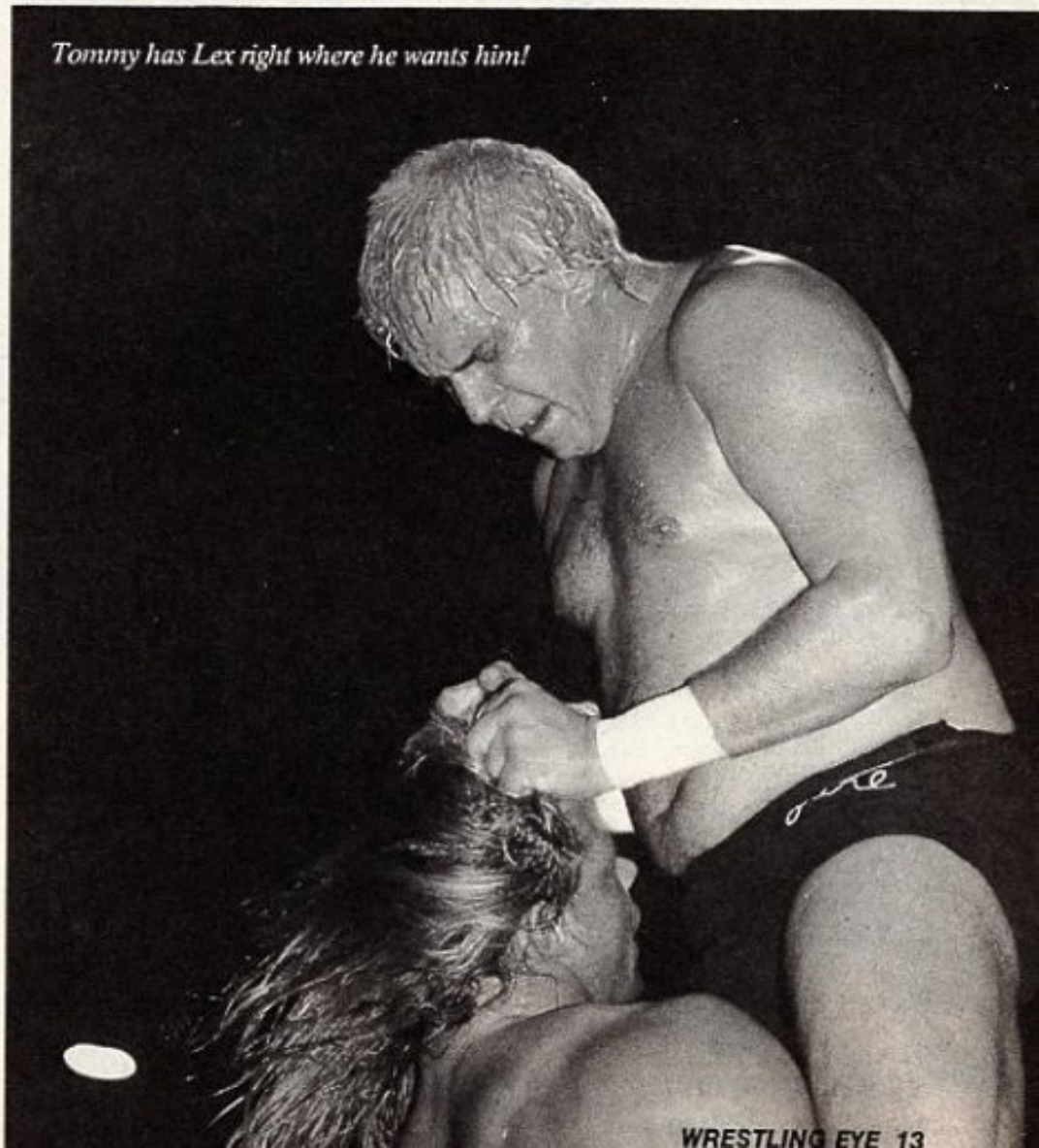
The former NWA world champ takes control of Luger.

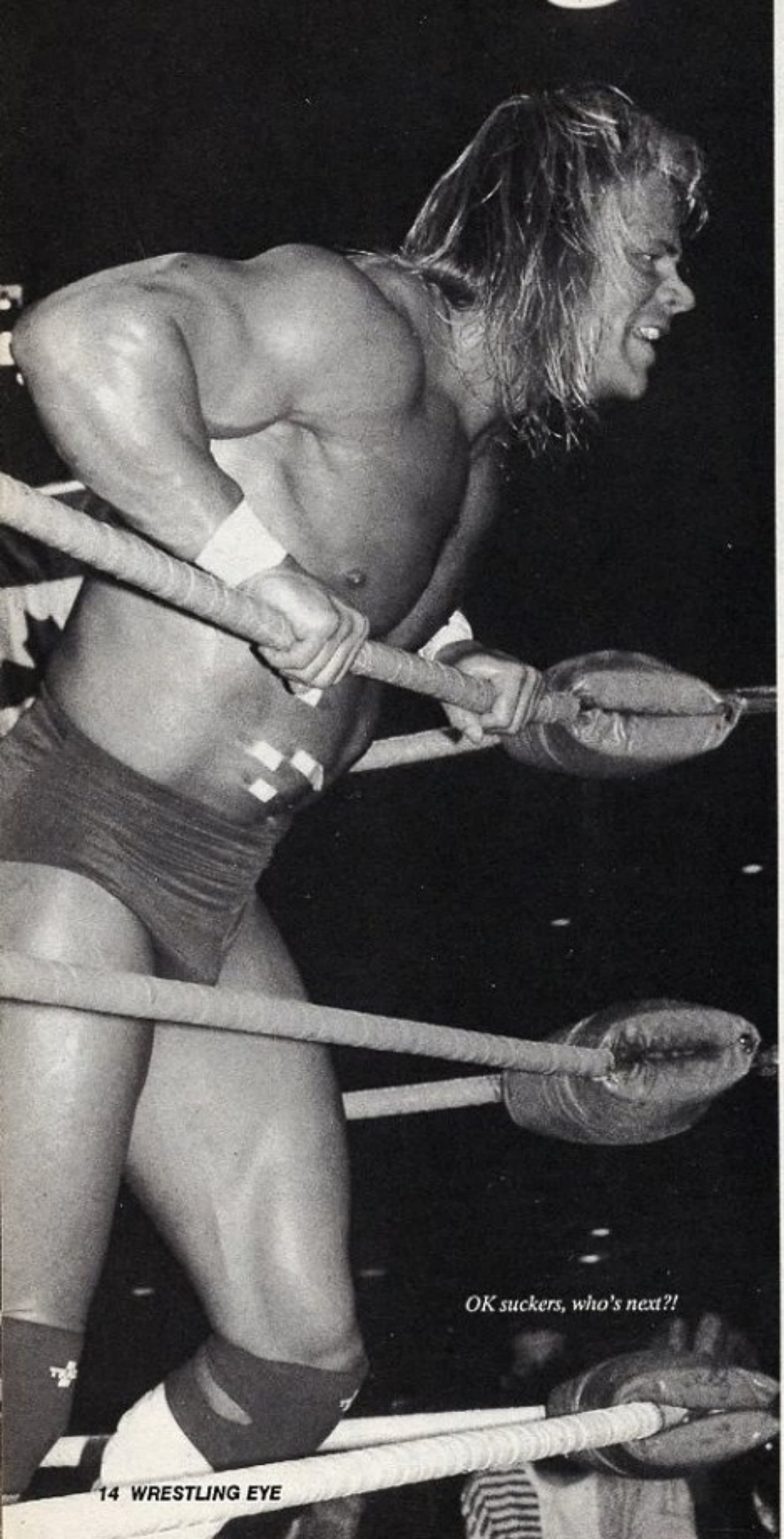
Tommy Rich perhaps more than Luger, craves the sweet taste of success, by being the world champ. On April 27,1981 in Augusta, Georgia "Wildfire" defeated the NWA champ Harley Race for the title. By doing so Rich became the second youngest (Lou Thesz was younger) man in the history of the organization to win the belt. Rich didn't get to bask in the limelight too long, as his championship ended four days later later in Georgia, as Race regained the belt.

When the contracts were first signed pitting Luger against Rich, it became clear that Tommy was written off as a serious threat to "Golden Boy". Luger possesses the physique and talent of future wrestlers for the world belt. His failure thus far to conquer Flair has caused him great frustration. Lex has held nothing back in his plan of attack when confronting Rich. He's pulling to get a rematch with "Nature Boy", but unfortunately he has to wait his turn.

Facts don't lie. Luger a native of Chicago, Illinois has come out on top of Rich in their matches. The decisions haven't been a result of a clear decisive pin. Then again controversy is Lex's middle name. Routinely, Luger has lured "Wildfire" close to a ring corner, angles himself to block the referee's positioning when counting, and puts his feet on the second rope for added insurance,



Tommy has Lex right where he wants him!



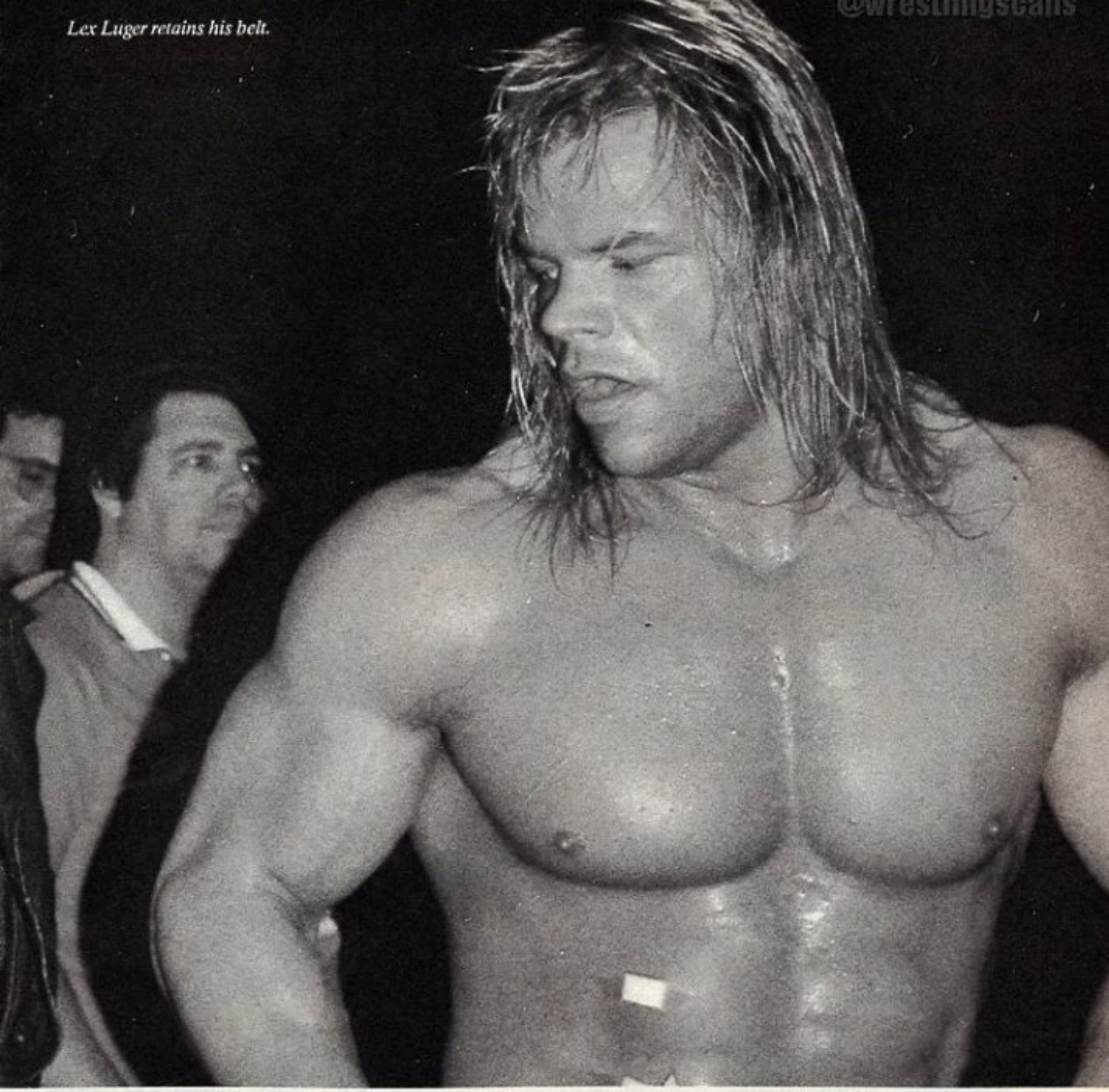
OK suckers, who's next?!

so that his Hendersonville, Tennessee opponent can't kick out of the pinning situation. Win at all costs by his own set of rules, that is Luger's creed. During a recent battle in Rochester, New York once again Rich had the "Total Package" on the run. Secured in the corner, Lex was in trouble. Rich climbed to the second rope and unloaded "knuckle sandwiches" repeatedly to Luger's head. The U.S. Champ was groggy and on the verge of defeat. In an act of desperation Luger grabbed "Wildfire" around the waist and pulled him down on a waiting knee. The low blow took the fight out of Rich and enabled Luger to cradle him in a small package hold.

Win, lose or draw Tommy Rich has not allowed his spirit to be broken. He fought his way back into the competitive ranks of the NWA. The independent circuits, tours for Japanese promoters and appearing for the Continental Wrestling Association in the South are among the ways Rich used to return to the NWA. Getting back in top form hasn't been easy, but once Luger agreed to his challenges the process seemed to speed up for Rich. He kept his foes on the run during a match by wearing them down with elbow blows, and working over the body. All Tommy wanted was a chance, now he's making good on his promise to those who showed faith in him.

At the Fairgrounds Coliseum in Syracuse, New York, Luger and Rich put on another exciting match. This time Lex relied totally on power holds. Bear hugs, back breakers and tests of strength (hand locks his specialty), Luger did what he knew would work. When "Wildfire" caught his breath, he gave the "Total Package" a running clothes line that sent him flying backwards over the top rope. As Luger wobbled back into the ring, Tommy didn't let up on his assault. He applied a spinning toe hold, slapped on vice-like headlocks and administered a few high knee lifts that sent Luger on his back. Annoyed and embarassed Lex was able to squeak out another victory. As Rich "sunset flipped", Luger reversed the hold and held onto Tommy's trunks for good measure.

Lex Luger has become a master of getting out of potentially compromising situations. He has handled himself well against Flair in the past and considers those matches all part of



Lex Luger retains his belt.

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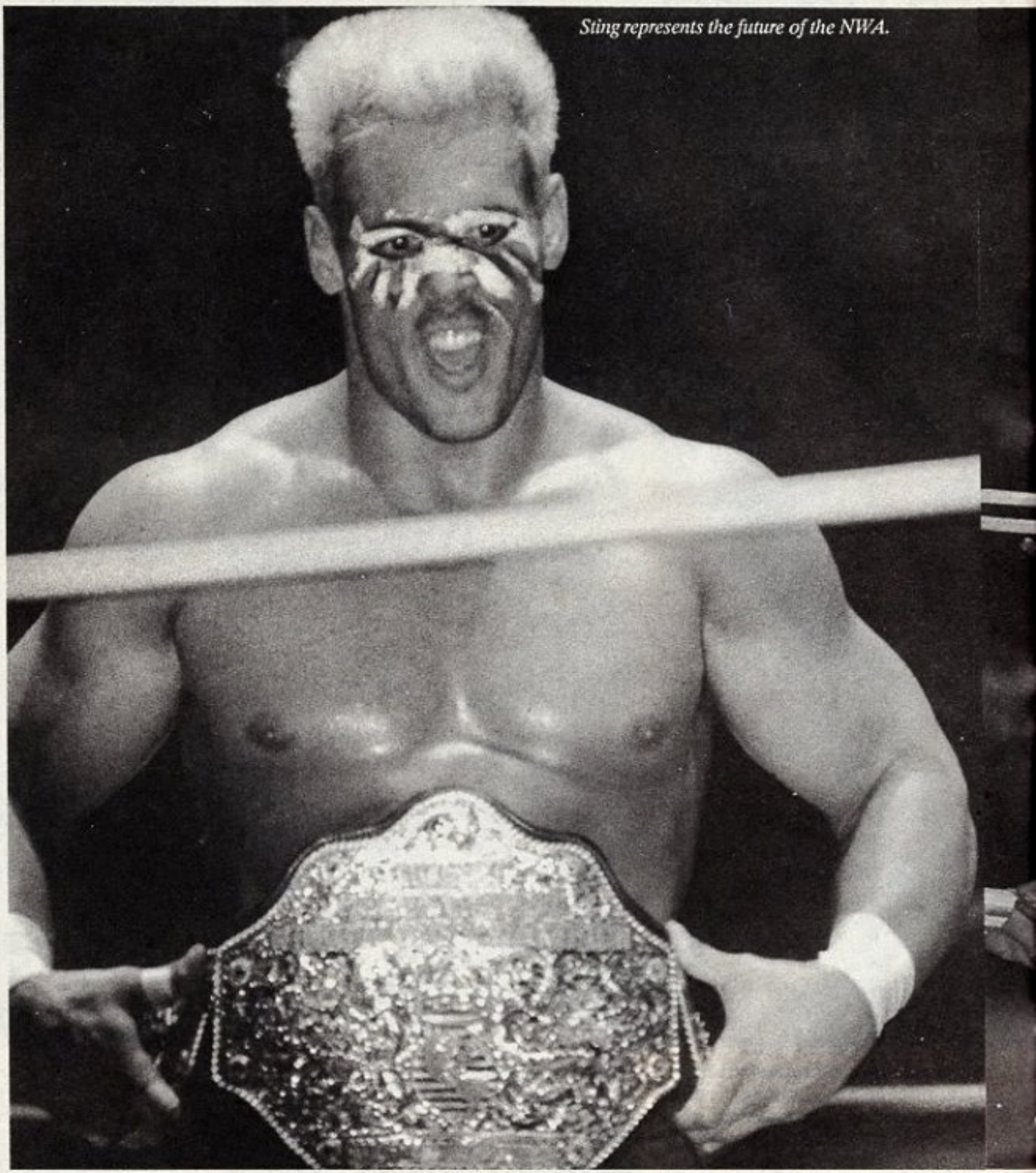
the learning process to the world title. Luger feels his challenges with Tommy Rich have made him well prepared to meet "Nature Boy". Rich has personal reasons to fuel his fire at the "Total Package". Revenge is his motivator. Last summer, Tommy's wrestling cousins, Johnny and Davey Rich were carried out on stretchers after being on the receiving end of Luger's savagery in Georgia matches.

To combat "Wildfire's" enthusiasm on the mat, Luger has implimented the abdominal stretch in their matches. It is a painful hold to his opponent, yet resting for Lex. The last thing Luger wants to happen is to look sloppy in front of his fans. He practices wrestling holds regularly, lifts weights and trains diligently before each match. Not the most popular NWA figure, Rich is gaining momentum with each city he appears in. Battling Norman the Lunatic, Mike Rotunda and the Cuban Assassin, have kept "Wildfire" in top wrestling form.

Most of the Luger-Rich matches end up in a slugfest. Neither is willing to give an inch and wants the feud to continue. Although busy battling Brian Pillman, Lex anxiously awaits his bookings with Rich. Most everyone loves the underdog. Tommy appreciates the role, as he sees less pressure on him to succeed which allows him more time to relax in the ring. Rich's return to the NWA is spreading like "Wildfire", looking to unwrap the "Total Package". Stay tuned, this one is far from being over..

THE HISTORY OF THE



Sting represents the future of the NWA.

While it has fallen on hard times lately, the National Wrestling Alliance can rightfully claim to be the oldest professional mat organization. Even though the World Wrestling Federation is the most popular right now, it has no hope of ever matching the NWA's long and star-studded history.

The NWA history goes clear back to 1905, when Frank Gotch was recognized as the first world champion. Gotch retired in 1913, but during those nine years, he was virtually unchallenged as the absolute king of his profession. When Gotch decide to hang up his boots, there was a turmoil while other wrestlers scrambled to get in position to claim his throne. A tournament was held to determine an official champion, with Charley Cutler defeating Henry Ordeman and Jesse Westegard to become the new kingpin of the mat world.

The world title picture was rather unclouded for the next several years until 1929, when two of the sport's

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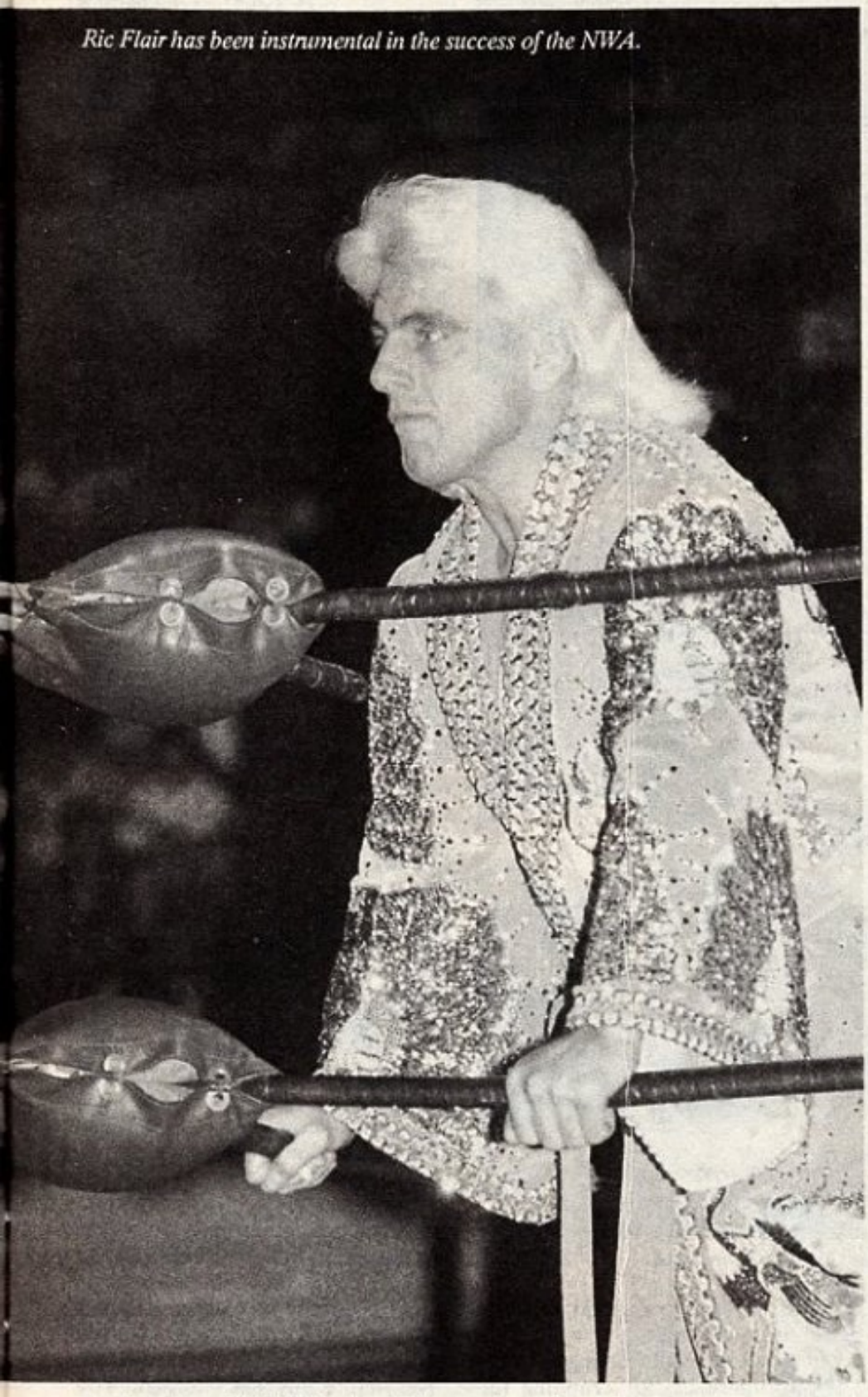


Ric Flair has been instrumental in the success of the NWA.

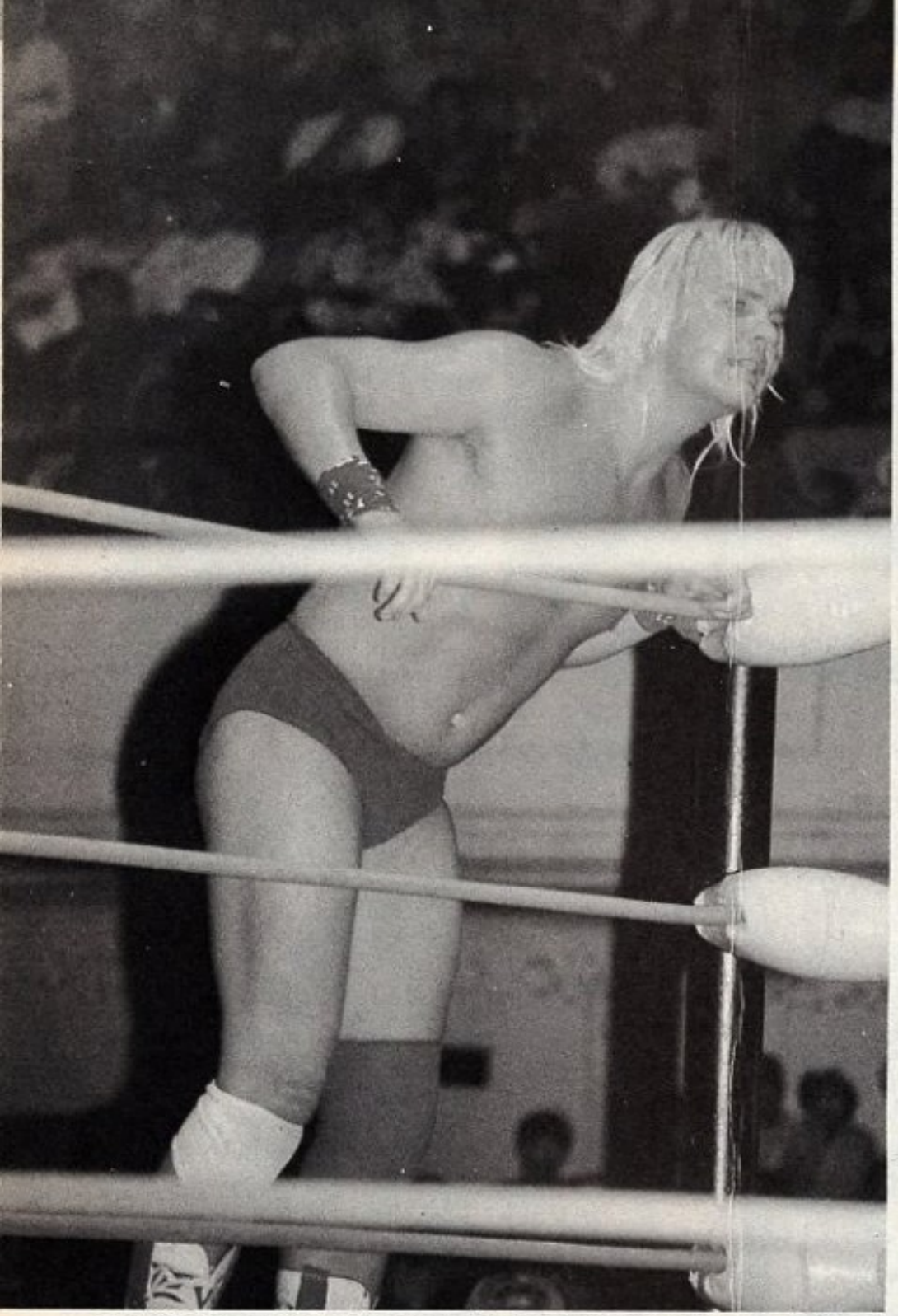
premier stars, Dick Shikat and Gus Sonnenberg, both declared themselves to be the champion. Shikat felt that his win over "Golden Greek" Jim Londos in Pennsylvania, enabled him to claim the title, while Sonnenberg was equally convinced that, by defeating the legendary Ed "Strangler" Lewis in Boston, he was the rightful champion. The controversy raged until an attempt at consolidation was made in 1932. Lewis cleanly pinned Shikat in New York City for what most considered the "real" NWA belt. However, another man by the name of Ed Don George challenged Lewis' title stature. George claimed that his win over Henry DeGlane in '31 entitled him to the world champion laurels.

There was no way to satisfy all the parties at the time, and the debate raged on until 1935, when Danny O'Mahoney cleaned up the mess by beating both George and Londos, thus becoming the first "undisputed" NWA king.

Less than a year later, an event occurred which affects the sport, even to this day. During a title match between Ali Baba and Dave Levin which took place in New Jersey, Baba was disqualified and Levin was declared the new champion. Shortly thereafter, the New Jersey Athletic Commission stepped in and nullified the decision, declaring that the title could not change hands via a disqualification. For the most part, that rule is still in effect today.

Although he wasn't a controversial individual himself, one "Crusher" Steve Casey was at the center of the next storm involving the NWA belt. Casey had beaten Lou Thesz in February of 1938 to become world champion, but later, while he was out of the country, the NWA officials had declared Everett Marshall as the champion. Casey and Marshall had met in the ring earlier in Montreal, but Casey won when Marshall threw him out of the ring, resulting in a DQ. During its convention, the Alliance brass decided to reverse the outcome of the match, determining that Crusher's exit from the ring had been accidental. It must have been a bitter pill for Casey to swallow, but he never regained championship status.

In the next decade, controversy took a vacation, but the title belt did change hands rather frequently. It was during this period that football great, Bronko Nagurski tried his hand at wrestling, and was successful. He won the title in 1939, and again in 1941, but it was "Wild Bill" Longson who spent the longest time (four years) as king of the hill. By July of 1948, it was decided that the Alliance should become better organized, and some consider this date as the "official" birth of the NWA. Promoter Sam Munchnik joined Al Haft and Pinka George in the front office of the "new" organization, and Orville Brown was declared the world heavyweight champion. Brown's reign ended tragically however, on Nov 1, when he was seriously injured



Barry Windham didn't feel like he got a fair shake with the NWA.

in an auto accident. Unable to continue his ring career, Brown was forced to surrender the coveted title to Lou Thesz, who would go on to be the greatest champion ever. For almost 11 years, Thesz was the best in the NWA, holding the championship strap on four different occasions. Other men like "Whipper" Billy Watson, "Nature Boy" Buddy Rogers, and tough Canadian Gene Kiniski would become champions, but Thesz usually came out in top in the end.

As the sixties transformed in to the rip-roaring seventies, a new breed of champion emerged. Younger, more athletic figure began scrapping for title shots. Dory Funk Jr. used his famous spinning toe hold to defeat Kiniski in February of 1969, and was to reign as undisputed champion for the next four years. By the time Dory's reign was coming to an end, younger brother Terry was ready to take up the challenge. After the elder Funk lost the belt to Jack Brisco, Terry was determined to recapture the gold for the family and did just that in late 1975. Some of the battles between Brisco and Funk still stand as all-time mat classics. It was clear those many years ago that Terry Funk had an inordinate amount of determination to become world champion. Now, in the 1990s, Funk is still going strong, and is still determined to take the title back to Texas, where he feels it rightfully belongs.

There were two other notable figures to emerge in the championship picture during the seventies. One was Japanese legend Shohei "Giant" Baba; and the other was "Handsome" Harley Race. While Baba was a true superstar in his native land, his abilities were never considered up to American standards. He did, in fact, win the NWA title on three different occasions, but was never able to hold the gold for more than a week or so. Baba's days of glory came to an end when Race defeated him on Sept 10, 1980 in the city of Otsu. The match marked the beginning of Race's heyday in the NWA, as he would go on to hold the title a record six times. That Race should be wrestling at all was somewhat of a miracle, since he was advised by doctors that he may never walk, let alone compete in athletics, following an accident during his teenage years. Not only did young Harley recover his walking ability, he went to become the man some would call the greatest of all time. The only blemish on the storied career of the man from Kansas City came when he joined the WWF ranks as "The King". Although his skills had deteriorated somewhat, he was still most capable, but was looked on by the fans of the Federation as nothing more than just another aging buffoon.

Now we move into what a lot of folks consider the most exciting decade in the Alliance's history; the 1980s. On Sept 17, 1981, one Richard Morgan Fleihr, conquered one Virgil Riley Runnels in Kansas City. As you probably know by now, R.M. Fleihr is "The Nature Boy" Ric Flair, and V.R. Runnels is better known as "THe American Dream" Dusty Rhodes. While not particularly significant at the time, the title match began the championship career of maybe the best ever. Flair went on to dominate the NWA during the next ten years, and as the 1990s begin, he shows little signs of weakening. Race would

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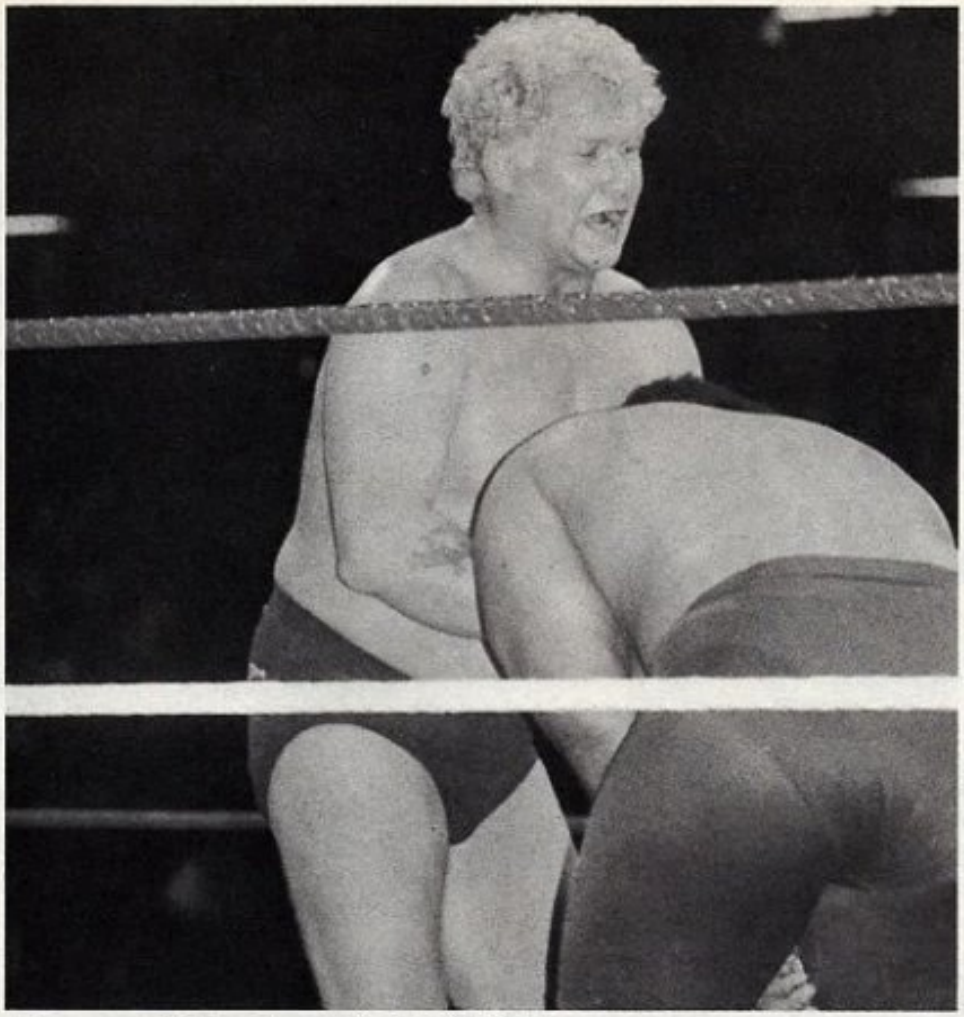

Many regard Harley Race as the best NWA champ ever.

come back to win the title from Flair in June of '83, but most of the Nature Boy's chief competition would come from Rhodes, who was destined to win the belt two more times before the decade ended. In addition, names like Tommy "Wildfire" Rich, Kerry Von Erich, Ronnie Garvin and Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat would all be etched on the 20 pounds of gold before 1990 arrived, but before it was over, Ric Flair's name would sit alone atop the list of longest reigning NWA champions.

Currently, both Terry Funk and Tommy Rich are busy trying to recapture past glories. Ronnie Garvin has moved on to the WWF, and Steamboat, shortly after losing the belt back to Flair in '89 was forced out of action for an undetermined period of time by a foot injury. Young stars like Sting, Lex Luger, Rick and Scott Steiner, the Great Muta and others could one day enjoy the sound of having "NWA World Champion" put before their names, but no one will ever replace Ric Flair. Flair is still the best in the business, and, in all the glorious years the NWA has been in business, there has never been, nor will there probably ever be, somebody quite like him.

Three former world champs, Dory Funk, Jr., Pat O'Connor and Terry Funk.

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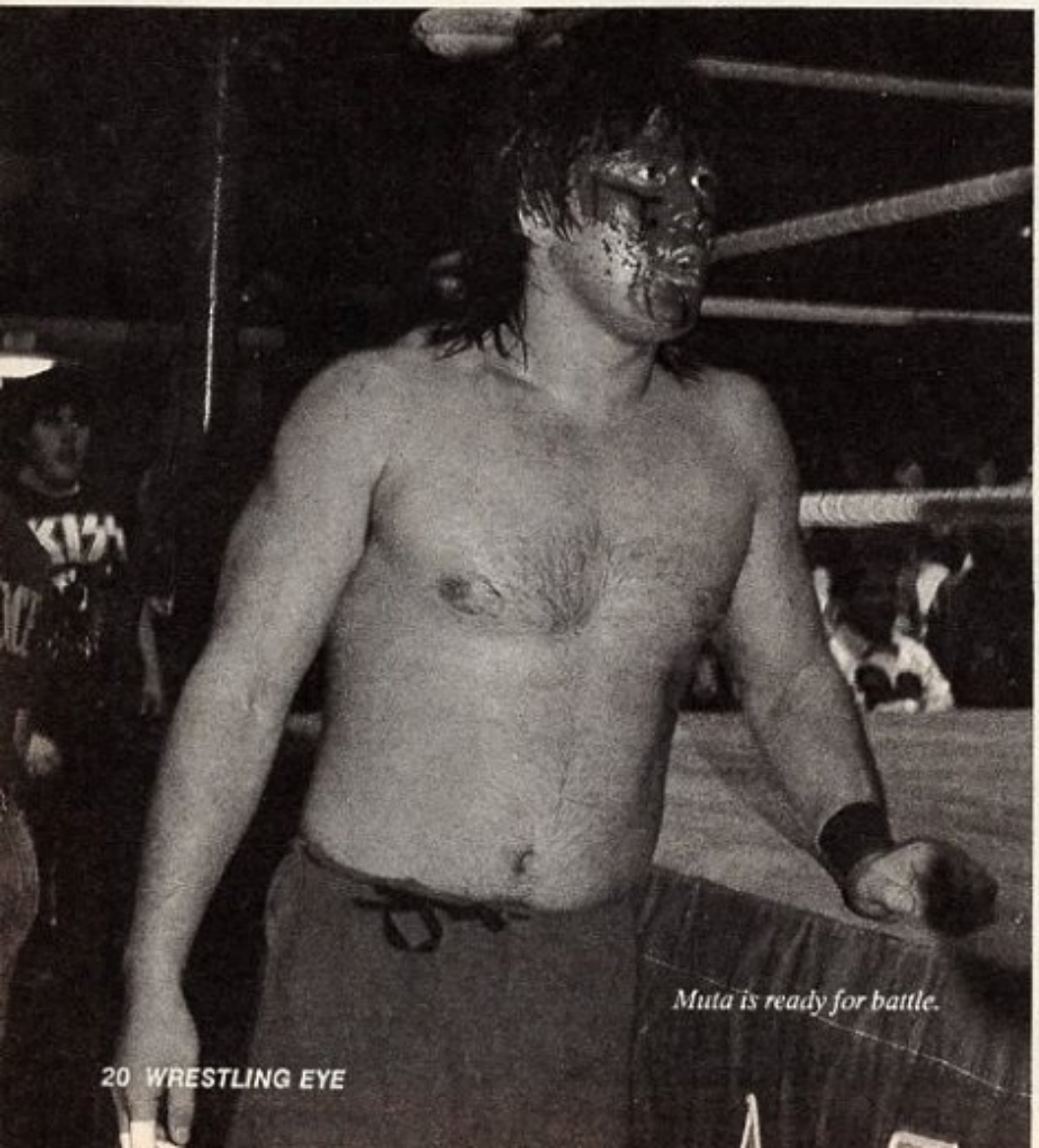
EAST MEETS WEST

STING VS THE GREAT MUTA



Muta is ready for battle.

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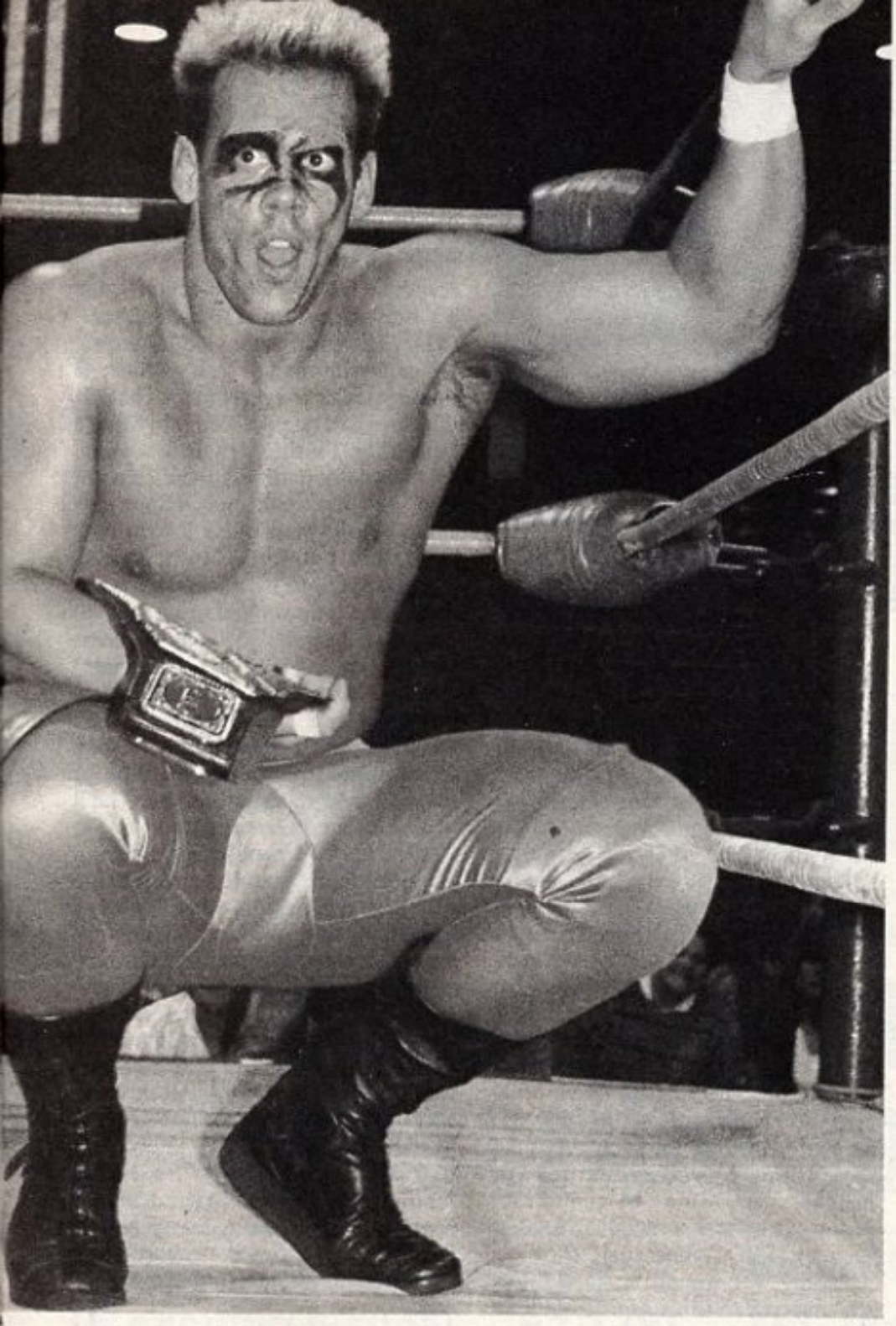

Unfortunately, considering what has taken place over the past several months it is highly unlikely Sting or Muta would want anything to do with each other except to be in opposite corners in the ring. Now the ring differences among the two prize athletes has escalated above the rule book and beyond the realm of competition. Now it's a personal war! This is no scene out of a movie, the mauling and blood spilled between them is taking place in arenas throughout the nation. A second place finish for either of them will not be tolerated. Hopefully, when the dust on the mat clears, each wrestler will be able to walk away under their own power.

It's quite obvious that Sting and Muta are hot commodities in the wrestling world. If there are any doubts as to their popularity when they make their way into the ring, the crowd reaction should clear up any questions. Loud, thunderous ovations are directed at the face-painted, blonde haired Californian Sting. His screams of appreciation to his supporters has not gone unnoticed. Muta, as dastardly and vicious as any pro in the sport is also respected by the fans, but in a different way. What he does and how he executes holds in the ring simply puts his audiences in awe.

Wrestlers, too, are amazed at the quickness and agility demonstrated by their Oriental opponent. Two strong personalities and varied styles have made it possible for them to work as a unit. Sting has offered his hand in friendship only to have it slapped by Muta's manager Gary Hart. Most people view Hart as the barrier that separates the two wrestlers. He is also being credited as the culprit adding fuel to the fire.

The first one-on-one confrontation between Sting and Muta came as an after-thought with a match that didn't originally involve them. Their involvement came down to sticking up for friends. Sting has been a close confidante to NWA World Champ "Nature Boy" Ric Flair. Muta along with Texas Wildman Terry Funk make up the J-Tex Corporation, guided by Hart.

Deep, personal convictions are felt by both parties in and out of the ring. Last July in Baltimore, Md., the much anticipated clash between Sting and Muta finally came to pass. Emotions were running high during the title match, with Funk up against the champ. Both men appeared exhausted and ready to collapse after twenty minutes of brutal battling. When it became clear that it was Funk who was on his way to unconsciousness first, Hart summoned Muta in for the save. Sting entered the fracas and stood on the side of Flair. All four men slugged it out before order was restored.

Instead of being part of the Flair-Funk solution, they became a new problem the NWA hoped would never come to pass. Months have gone by since their initial battle, but tempers haven't cooled. Pride and patriotism has propelled Sting to concentrate totally on Muta. The NWA T.V. title has been one element among them that continues to raise controversy. At one time Sting was the proud wearer of the belt. Then the title was held up after a confrontation with Muta. Through trickery and deceit, the TV title found it's way into the Gary Hart camp and snapped around Muta's waist. Losing the belt isn't what has Sting hot, it's that he wasn't defeated in a fair way. This is

Sting is certainly a fan favorite.

The Great Muta takes advice from Gary Hart.

where pride is factored on Sting's part. "Hey, I have nothing against anyone, but it's just the arrogance and ideals. Muta's displays make me sick. You just don't see something you want and automatically think it's for the taking. Sting captured the title fair and square. Hart, Funk, and Slater have filled Muta's head with a lot of lies and turned him into a selfish thug. When Sting gets finished with him, Muta will want to go back to the rice fields," Tom Zenk said in Johnstown, Pa.

It's become obvious there is no compassion displayed to those who stand in his way. Women, as well as men are apparently fair game. Missy Hyatt, "Hotstuff" Eddie Gilbert's manager, confronted Muta, Hart and Sullivan during a televised interview, and she was sprayed in the face with the mysterious green mist, causing her temporary blindness. Muta showed no remorse after causing the woman pain and suffering. Being a long time friend of Missy, that incident only added more anger from Sting's point of view. Thus far, when the two wrestlers have collided, Sting's stamina and leaping ability have been his main asset for survival. Having to deal with Muta's repertoire of martial arts, the green mist, an assortment of suplexs and Hart and Funk constantly patrolling the ringside area, Sting has held his own quite admirably.

No one may ever find out who is the best. Sting has been awarded the matches with Muta. A pinfall appears out of the question, Hart has seen to that. When their traveling wrestling war wound up in Buffalo, sticking true to form, Hart would not compromise Muta's TV title or the undefeated record that had accumulated. Sting tangled his opponent into a pretzel, wrapping his legs into the Scorpian, a leg lock yet to be broken once applied. With Muta in pain and desperately trying to counter the hold, Hart decided it was time for his law and order to supercede the rule book. In full view of the referee Hart delivered a forearm smash to the back of an unsuspecting Sting. Once the torturous hold became undone, a mugging ensued. Muta regained his composure and began dropping elbows and kicking the disoriented Sting. Hart found pleasure by putting a towel around Sting's neck and began chocking him until "Dr. Death" Steve Willams came running from the dressing room to break up the action. In his hurry to exit the ring, once Willams made his presence, Muta dropped this title belt in the ring. Sting put it on his waist and dared Muta to attempt to reclaim it. No response has given. Reluctantly, the TV belt was returned to the referee.

Gary Hart has done an outstanding job of westernizing Muta. Money is power, power is everything. That set of values had been drilled into Muta's head. The TV title is their first phase in eventually getting to the "Nature Boy" and his world belt. Right now Muta is enjoying a quick jog through the talent put forth by the NWA. "Sting will fall to us, it's going to take more time than we had originally anticipated, but the job will be completed. I'm sure we can find something for Sting to do, He could carry our bags and chauffeur the J-Tex Corp. in our custom limo. When Muta finishes with Sting, he'll be so embarrassed to show his face, he'll quit wrestling," Hart shouted.

To tackle two problems at once, a Thunderdome match pairing Sting with Flair against Muta and Funk was agreed upon. With an electrified cage encompassing the ring, the only way for either duo to come away victorious would be to surrender. That theory, however final it appeared on paper did not end the bitterness between all four wrestlers. All that was accomplished was affording Sting and Muta time off needed to allow their physical wounds to heal. Like his famous father The Great Kabuki, Muta is determined to carry on the family's international reputation of wrestling excellence, whatever the cost.

It is very rare that two such talented personalities enter the sport at approximately the same time. It's even more of a coincidence when they cross paths in the same organization. All indications point to the fact that there isn't enough room in the NWA rings for both Sting and Muta. Hopefully, a compromise can be reached. As a tag team, no other twosome would be safe from defeat. Until such an agreement would be made, the Sting and Muta matches will go down in the record books as among the best in NWA history, and that's the ultimate compliment.

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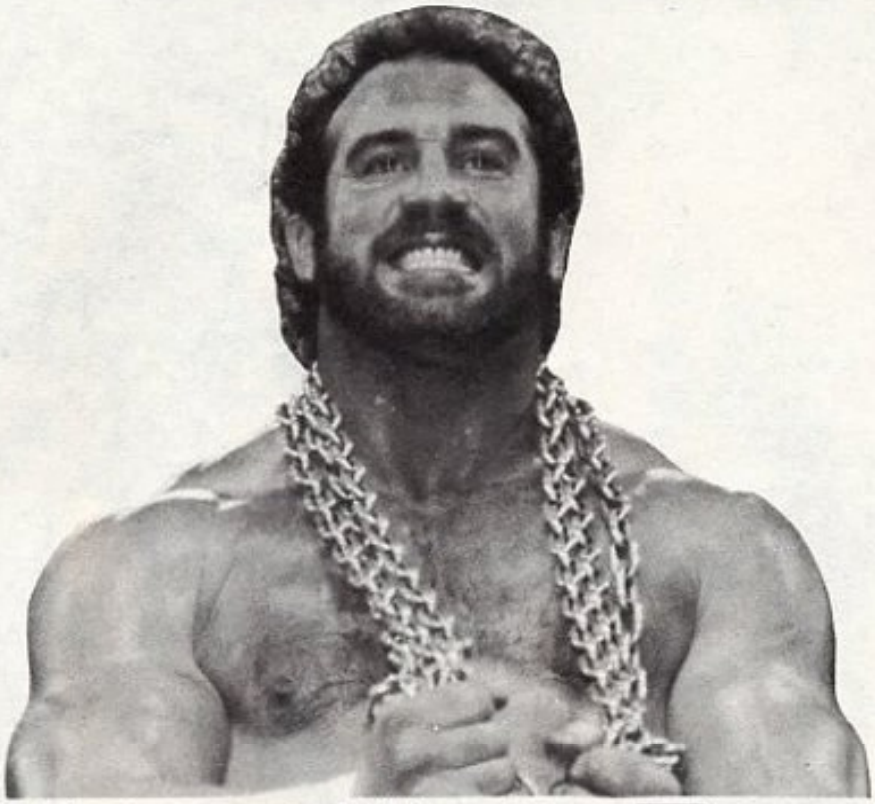

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Can the Midnight Express last without Comette?

THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

RIDING THE SOLO TRACKS

BY TOM CLUTTERS

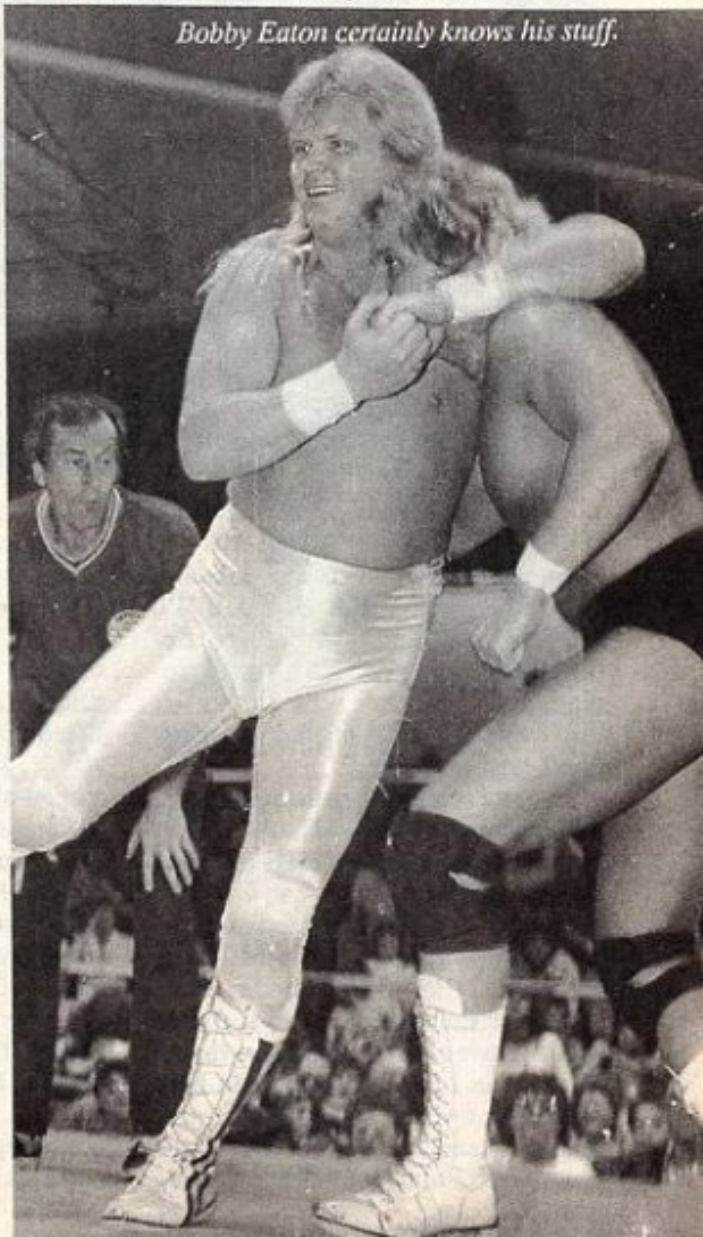
It would now appear that one of professional wrestling's most close-knit alliances is breaking up. It has been a long and glorious, although somewhat controversial period in the annals of the NWA and now it seems that a great tag team and their manager will finally be parting ways.

Since the early 1980s, Jim Cornette and his Midnight Express have virtually dominated the tag team scene. In fact, when analyzing all the data, it could be said that the Express were one of the most successful teams in NWA history, even more so than the awesome Road Warriors. While they spent much of their time together as hated rulebreakers, Cornette and company have always been regarded as one of the more innovative teams around. What his wrestlers were unable to do themselves, Cornette and his ever-present tennis racket could certainly handle.

Now that the new decade has rolled around, it seems Cornette, Bobby Eaton and Stan Lane are parting company, and the reasons for the split would, at first glance seem silly.

The difficulties began when Cornette agreed to become a non-official "advisor" to one of the NWA's newest and brightest tag teams, the Dynamic Dudes. At first, Eaton and Lane said nothing, but as time wore on, they became more and more resentful of the time that their manager was spending with the new team. "Johnny and Shane are a couple of good kids, and they've asked me to help them out," Cornette said. "I'm not actually managing them, you understand, I'm just giving them a little advice. I'm still exclusively the manager of the best tag team in the world, the Midnight Express."

Day by day, it become more and more obvious that there were hard feelings. Eaton and Lane spent most of their time apart from Cornette, working mostly on their own. When finally confronted about the situation, Stan Lane made no secret of his feelings. "Look, Jimmy Cornette is supposed to be the manager of the Midnight Express, but lately he's spending a lot more of his time with the Dudes than he is with me and Bobby. We've accomplished a lot as a team, but it seems that Jimmy's decided



Bobby Eaton certainly knows his stuff.

Bobby and Jim were always close friends.

we're not that important to him anymore." While not as outspoken as Lane, the quieter Eaton added "I'll tell you something, I've been part of the Midnight Express since the beginning, and I've never seen Jimmy act this way. It's kind of like we really don't exist anymore."

Cornette fumed when he heard what the Express had said. "That's nothing but a whole bunch of crap and and Bobby and Stan both know it," he shouted. "I've bled, sweated and had my fanny whipped for the Midnight Express. I've always been there whenever they needed me, and now they're saying that I'm ignoring them? Look, Stan Lane has only been here about three years, so I might be able to understand why he feels the way he does. But Bobby? Bobby has been with since the beginning and he knows better than that!"

After several attempts at making peace, Cornette finally gave up and stopped escorting the Express to the ring. "THat's not my choice," he insisted. "Stan and Bobby want it that way." Meanwhile, rumors quickly spread about the real reasons for the Cornette/Express rift. According to one report, the whole problem centered around a situation involving Stan Lane, Johnny Ace and a certain young lady. Since the incident, Stan has held a great deal of resentment towards Johnny. While Cornette wouldn't divulge any of the details, he did admit that the situation did exist and was not a media creation. "I'm not going to embarrass anyone, Cornette muttered. "But all that stuff happened a long time ago, and it's hard for me to believe that Stan would hold a grudge."

As many people expected, the situation eventually evolved to an in-ring collision between the two teams. While he was at ringside, Cornette didn't commit himself to either side right away. Lane and Eaton signed for the matches without Cornette's consent, so the Dudes has little choice but to accept the challenge. "We didn't want ot cause any trouble when we asked Jim Cornette for help," said Shane Douglas. "In fact, if we'd known what was going to happen, we probably wouldn't have gotten involved. But since Bobby and Stan want to make it personal, me and Johnny won't back down one inch." While the Dudes did suffer from their relative lack of experience, some of Cornette's influence was obvious in their ringwork. Raw at first, Johnny and Shane began to perfect their teamwork and became more efficient as the match went on. "I didn't have to show them anything more than once," Cornette admitted. "Those boys sure are quick learners."

Under the guidance of Jim Cornette, the Midnight Express has seen little in the way of failure. As former world tag champions, and as the only team to ever the U.S. and World titles at the same time, the Express has become the epitome of tag team wrestling. First it was Eaton and Dennis Condrey, and then came Stan Lane, but the win-loss ratio of the team didn't suffer. It seemed like nobody could stop the Midnight Express on their quest for victory, and this had to have an effect on Jim Cornette. He was being frozen out by the team he took to glory.

Needless to say, the boisterous manager has had many mixed feelings on the situation. "I've spent a lot of sleepless nights over this," he said. "I think back to all the good times we had and all the matches we won. It hasn't been easy, but nothing worth having ever is. On the other hand, it burns my gut to think that Stan and Bobby would try to make me the bad guy in this whole thing. No one on wrestling history has ever dedicated themselves to their team like I have, and now, it's all coming apart because of sheer stupidity. I'll tell you, it almost enough to make me hang it up, but I won't." So fans, only time will tell what the future holds for the Midnight Express and Jim Cornette.

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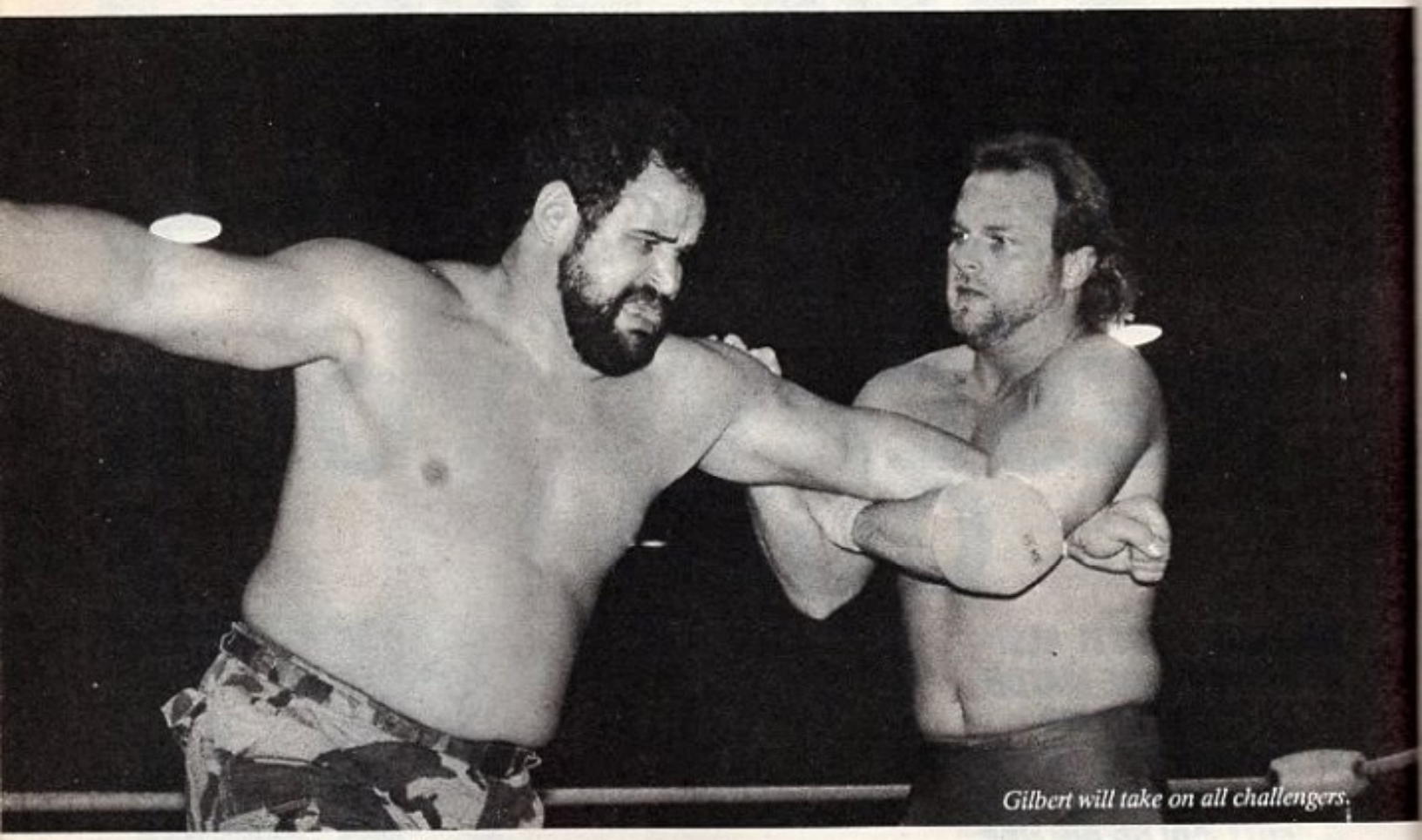
The Personal Side Of EDDIE GILBERT



Gilbert will take on all challengers.

BY DON LAIBLE

The National Wrestling Alliance should be glad to have Eddie Gilbert as part of its ranks. His creativeness and entertaining athletic abilities have captivated fans nationwide and his wrestling style ain't too bad either! He may not have the physical stature of a Lex Luger or a Sid Vicious, but he certainly has ring savvy and plenty of wrestling knowledge. Eddie has also paid his dues outside the ring, where he has booking experience and knows what is essential for a promotion to thrive. Yes, Eddie Gilbert is an all-around guy, and a proven leader in the sport of professional wrestling.

While Gilbert is not "the boy next door", he does have deep convictions that he adheres to. He is a hard worker who only wants to give his all to any promotion he works for. He also looks out for fellow wrestlers and can usually be counted on to bring out the best in them. After all, it was under his guidance that Scott Steiner was able to shine, and Sting was brought to the limelight.

Gilbert first noticed Sting in the struggling Continental Wrestling Association. At that time, he was part of a tag team called the Bladerunners with another newcomer, Jim Helwig, who today is better know as the Ultimate Warrior. Eddie recognized Sting's untapped potential and became his manager and trainer. They then ventured to the fledgling Universal Wrestling Federation and it was here that Sting really began to shine. He drew on Gilbert's experience and listened closely to his advice and as a result, Sting is now one of the biggest superstars in wrestling today.

Eddie Gilbert is a true competitor. He has never allowed injuries or personal matters to keep him out of the ring. When he steps into the squared circle, he know he is there for one thing and one thing only; to wrestle and to give the fans their money's worth. Although his shoulders have been pinned from time to time, Gilbert has proven that you can't keep a good man down for long. It's quite evident that Eddie's work rate is top notch, whether its a challenge for a title belt during a main event match or the opening match on the program, you'll always see 110% from this

wrestler.

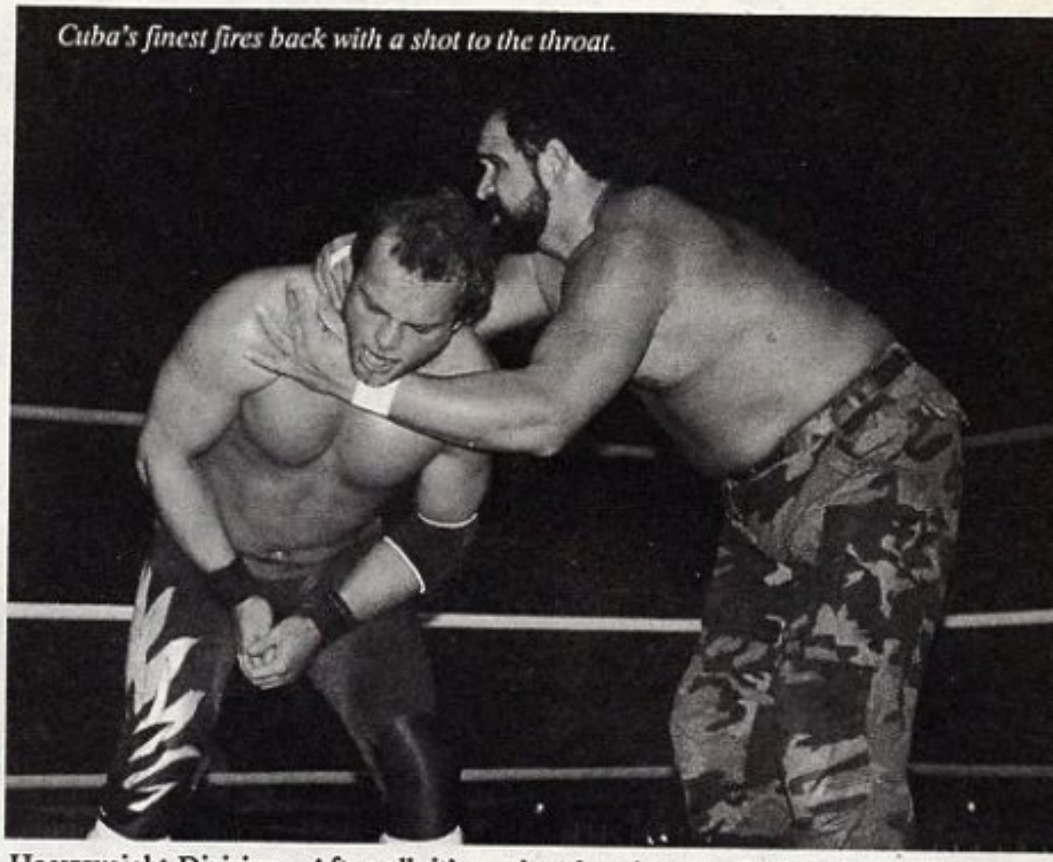
Perhaps Gilbert's most recent memorable matches were where he faced off against the Cuban Assassin. The Assassin, a cagey veteran of the international mat circuit, was signed to meet with twelve year pro, and pride of Lexington, Tennessee, Eddie Gilbert for a series of encounters throughout the New York State region. Within seconds of their first encounter, Gilbert had the fans on their feet, screaming for him to incite more punishment on his hapless foe. Gilbert opened the match by darting out of corner and connecting with a dropkick to his opponent's chin. Eddie then met him with a couple of hip tosses and a leaping fist off the second rope to the Cuban's forehead. It seemed like a sure victory for "Hot Stuff", but the Assassin has some tricks of his own.

The Cuban Assassin headed for safer grounds and hid behind the referees. When he rubbed his country's flag in the unsuspecting Gilbert's face and demanded he salute it, Eddie went wild. Head scissors, forearm smashes, power slams and two reverse neckbreakers quickly tamed his opponent. Eddie finished off the Assassin by whipping him into the ropes and catching him coming off and then wrapping him into a small package hold for the victory. Yes, if it wasn't evident before, it was certainly clear now, don't mess with Eddie Gilbert and expect to get away with it!

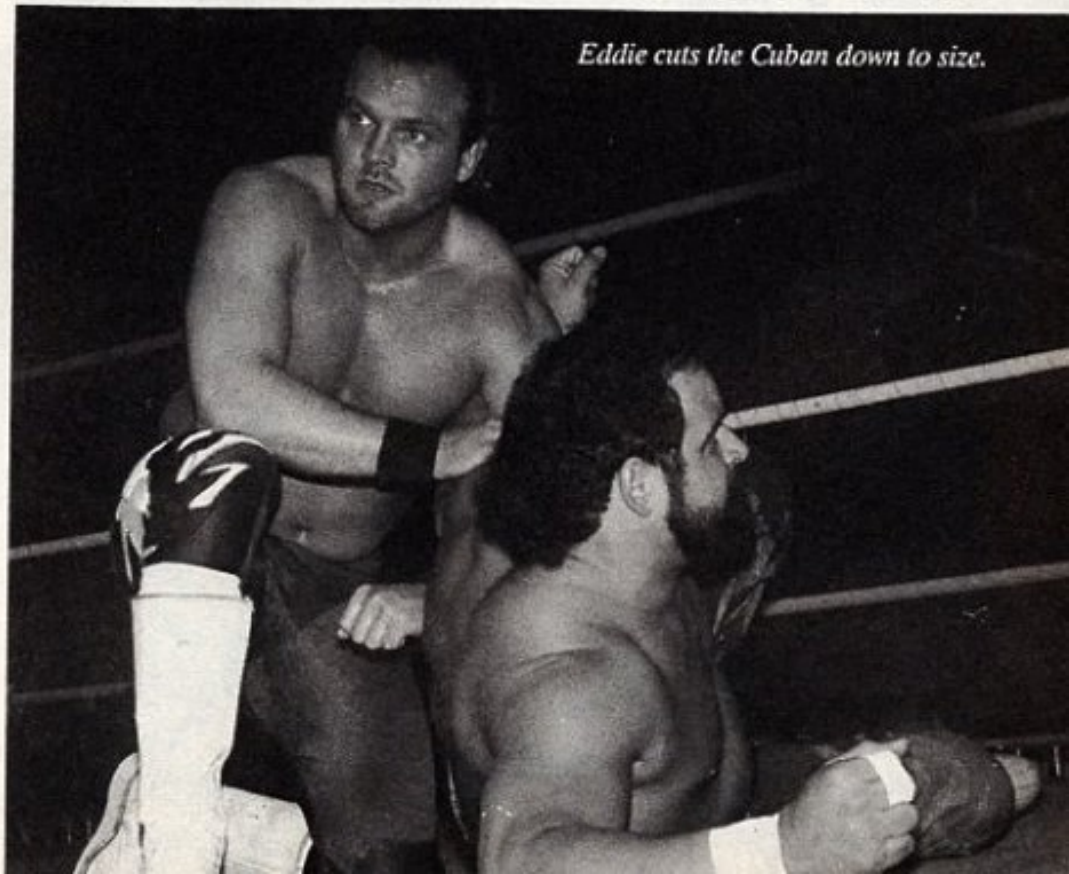
When travelling from show to show, Eddie often goes with long-time friend Tommy "Wildfire" Rich. Both men are avid Hank Williams Jr. fans and they can listen to his tapes for hours at a time to break up the long car rides. Tommy Rich has nothing but praise for his friend. "I owe a lot ot Eddie for helping me get started in wrestling". I feel like we're family, not just friends," he said. When asked about any future plans, Tommy just nodded and smiled knowingly before stating, "Eddie and I have targeted the NWA World Tag team belts to be ours, and I know we'll have a great time busting open anyone who stands in our way. I know it sounds like a bold statement, but with Eddie on your team, how can you not be totally confident?"

Eddie's greatest dream is to have the NWA resurrect the Junior Heavyweight Division. After all, it's much easier for a wrestler in the 200 - 220 pound range to go up against somebody his own size and not a mammoth 400 pounder. Going after a belt held by heavier wrestlers has made it nearly impossible for the littler guys to gain a title. Gilbert feels that many of the "lighter superstars" are not getting the promotional attention they deserve. "After all, power is an essential part of a wrestler's performance, but it's not necessarily how big you are, it's how you use your strength, " he explained. "My best matches recently have been with Brian Pillman, and he certainly isn't the biggest guy in the NWA."

Eddie Gilbert would like another shot a Ric Flair's gold. Before you



Cuba's finest fires back with a shot to the throat.



Eddie cuts the Cuban down to size.

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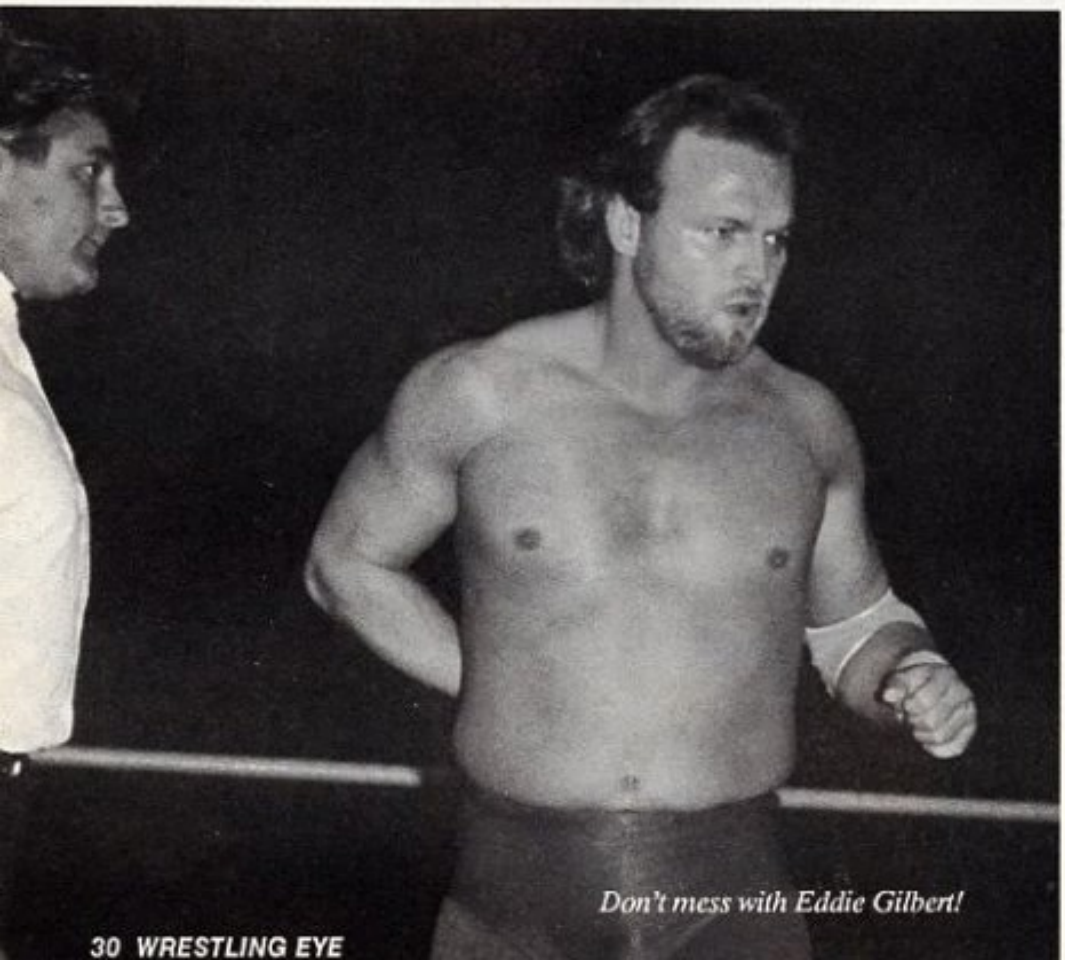
Eddie tightens an armbar on the Cuban Assassin.



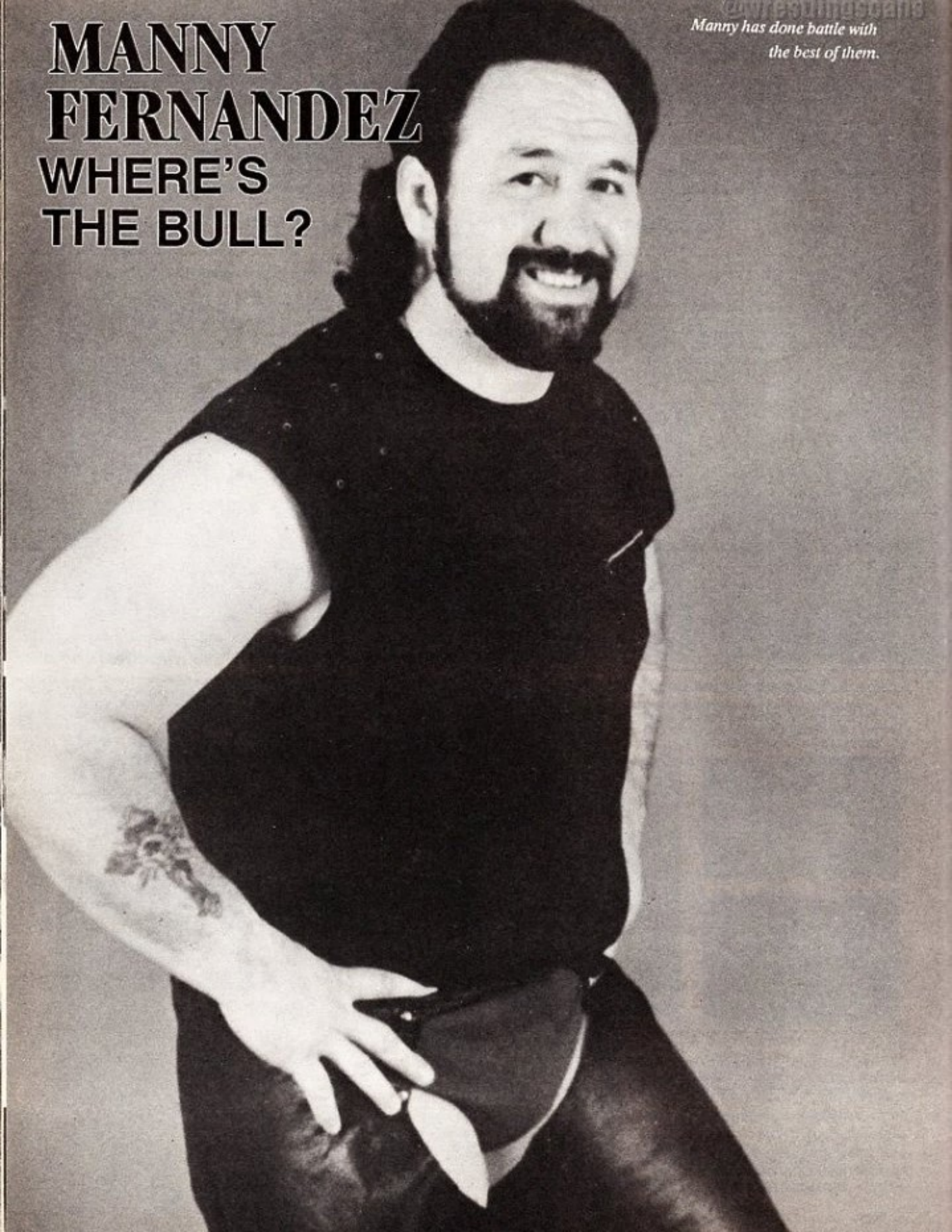
Don't mess with Eddie Gilbert!

discount this as just a dream, remember, Flair has been beaten before, and Eddie may just be the man to do it again. In fact, Steve Williams can see this happening easily. "Eddie doesn't just shoot his mouth off. He takes wrestling quite seriously and if he says he can beat Flair, then I know he can do it. It's funny, but there was always a mutual respect between us. Both of us wanted the UWF titles and wouldn't back down. I have more respect for him than any other wrestler, past or present," he said.

Recently, Eddie Gilbert and Tommy Rich faced off against the Skyscrapers, Dan Spivey and Sid Vicious. They did not emerge victorious, but the loss isn't devastating to Gilbert. He knows he gave it his best shot and further more, he knows there will be other matches. Next time, you can bet the Skyscrapers won't be as lucky. Meanwhile, Eddie is pleased just to have given the fans a truly exciting match. He is also glad to be part of one of the most exciting sports in the world today - professional wrestling.

MANNY FERNANDEZ

WHERE'S THE BULL?



Manny has done battle with the best of them.

@wrestlingcards

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The Fernandez/McDaniel battles are classics.

He has long been recognized as one of pro wrestling's toughest men. For years, he was a fan favorite, teaming with such stars as Dusty Rhodes and Jimmy Valiant, feuding with some of the sport's baddest villains.

There were some who said Manny Fernandez was getting tired of being Mr. Nice Guy, and one evening, on national television, they were proven right. After weeks of refusing huge financial incentives from manager Paul Jones, Fernandez finally succumbed, turning against Valiant and joining Jones' stable of rulebreakers. It was only a short time later that he teamed with Rick Rude to win the NWA tag team titles, and since then has stayed on the wrong side of the fence.

During the last couple of years, Manny Fernandez has been in the background, working in smaller Southern promotions and also spending some time in the AWA. WRESTLING EYE recently had a chance to talk with the man known as "The Raging Bull":

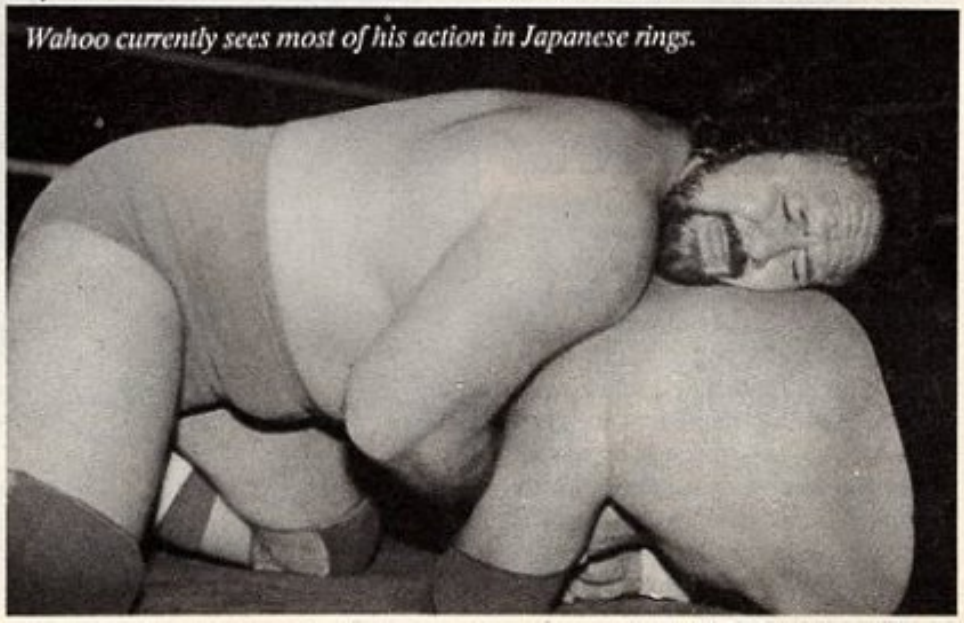
WE: Manny, it's been quite some time since most wrestling fans have seen you on a regular basis. Some say it's because you've been "blackballed" by the major federations.

MF: That's a bunch of bull. I've done almost everything a man could hope to do in professional wrestling. I've been a world champion twice, and I've held almost every other belt you can name. The reason I'm working where I am is quite simple; I want to. I can work where and when I want to, and I don't have to mess with a lot of the bull---- I've to put up with in the past. I have done it all and I certainly don't have to prove myself to anyone.

WE: You were always referred to as "a working man's wrestler", meaning you were never afraid to sacrifice and work hard to get ahead in the business. Have you ever thought about all the fans who used to admire you so much?

MF: Let me ask you something. With all of that so-called admiration you speak of, tell me just how far it got me. Did the fans ever do one thing for me? You said I was a working man's wrestler...hey, that never changed. I still work a hell of a lot harder than

Wahoo currently sees most of his action in Japanese rings.



@wrestlingscans

some of those so-called "muscle men" in the business today, and I've never changed my style. It's just that I began caring more about myself than anyone else.

WE: Everyone remembers the night the Raging Bull changed his attitude. You accepted a briefcase full of money from Paul Jones, then smashed Jimmy Valiant over the head with it.

MF: Hey, the money that Paul Jones offered me was more than I had ever seen in my life. I'd have been a fool not to take it. That lamebrained Valiant spent some much time dancing around the ring and trying to please the fans. I got my butt whipped more than once while he was talking to somebody at ringside, and I just got fed up with it. Like I said, it would have been stupid for me to turn down that much money just to keep Jimmy Valiant and the fans happy.

WE: It wasn't long before you and Rick Rude became the NWA tag team champions. Many people thought you two were a strange combination, since your wrestling styles were so different.

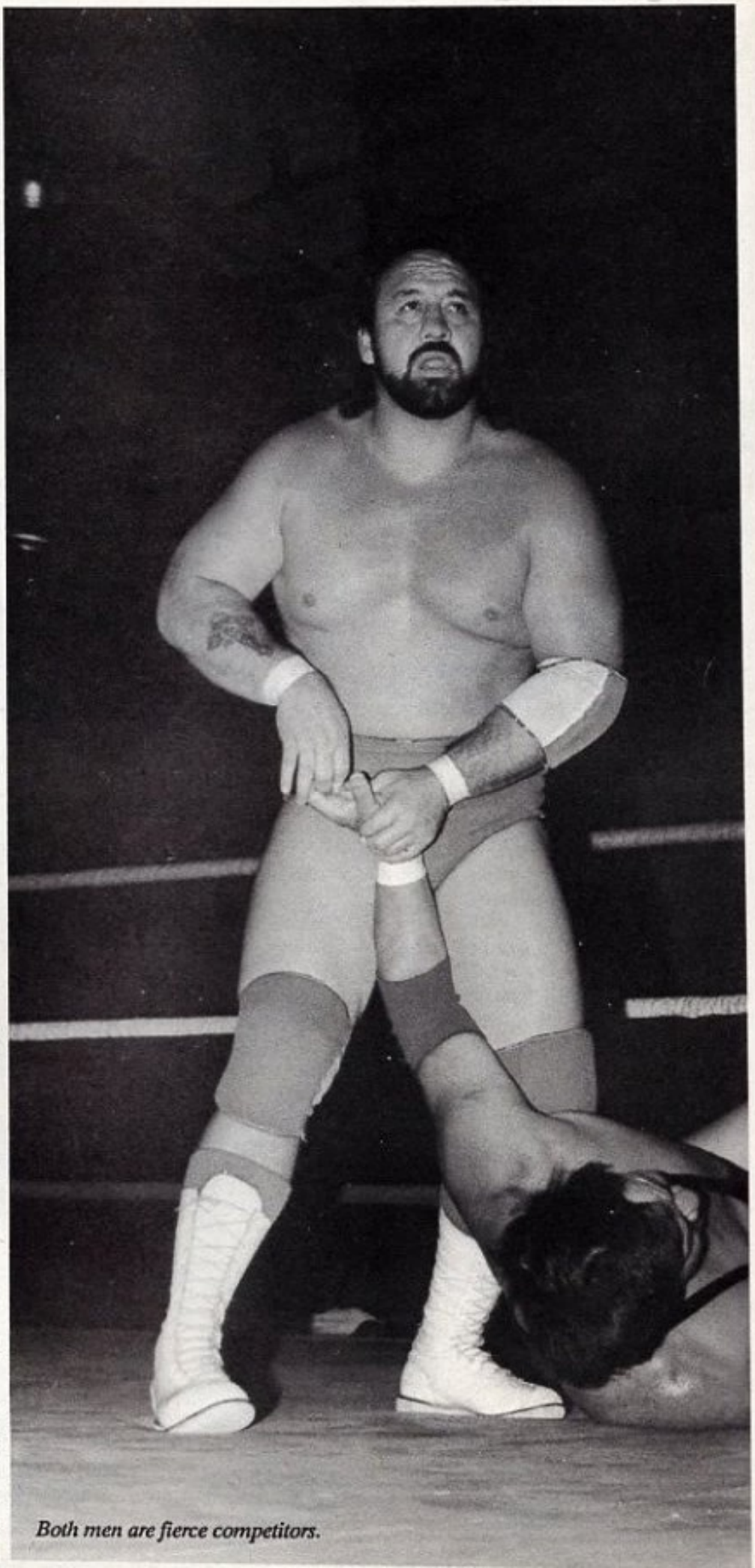
MF: Hey, it's the results that count. Obviously, Paul Jones knew what he was doing when he put us together. Yeah, me and Rude were different, but we worked together as a team and we won! Jones put together the plan and we carried it out to perfection.

WE: But you were also a world champion with Dusty Rhodes as your partner.

MF: No, you said it wrong. I was a world champion IN SPITE OF DUSTY RHODES. The only thing Rhodes ever cared about was himself. I had to do 99% of the work for the team, and Rhodes took 99% of the credit. I see now why Rhodes bills himself as "the common man" or something like that. Let me tell you, it's a joke. Dusty doesn't like to be called common. He says he's the top dog in the business, but we all know the truth.

WE: Back in 1986, when you joined the NWA, you faced Wahoo McDaniel in a tournament for the U.S. title and lost. Is that where your dislike for Wahoo began?

MF: I never really liked Wahoo McDaniel from the time I first met him. He's another one who says he worries about the fans and his partners, but Wahoo doesn't mean it. He's really very arrogant and totally self-centered and only worries about him-



Both men are fierce competitors.

@wrestlingscans

self. I chased him for a long time to get a shot at the U.S. title and he acted like I didn't even exist. I was probably the man he feared most, because he knew I could beat him. When we were both in the AWA, I decided to forget about the titles and just concentrate on beating the hell out of him. And that's just what I did.

WE: Let's take a minute to talk about another man you have a lot of trouble with...Abdullah the Butcher. If I remember, you were the only man to ever suplex the Butcher.

MF: Not once, but FIVE times. Don't forget that. I put him down five times! To be honest, Abdullah is the toughest man I ever faced in the ring. You can beat on him all day long, and he still comes back for more. I don't think you can really hurt him. There were plenty of times when he beat me like a rug, but I never backed down from him, not one time!

WE: In your career, you've wrestled just about every major star the sport has to offer.

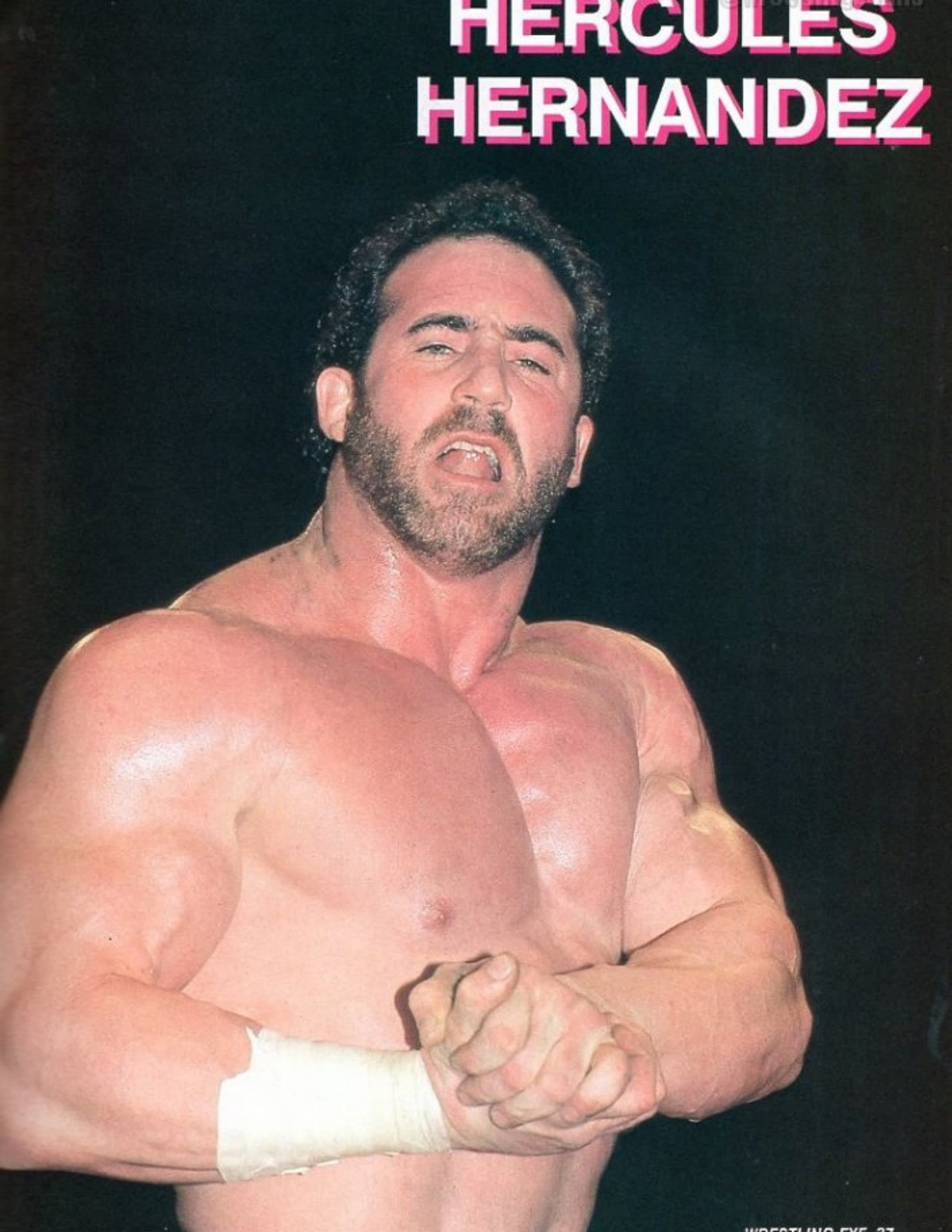
MF: Hey, the Bull fought 'em all, baby. From the Butcher to the Barbarian, to Ric Flair, they all know who I am.

WE: Which brings us back to the question asked earlier. Why are you spending so much time in the smaller organizations when you could probably beat most of today's champions?

MF: Whether you realize it or not, there's a lot of politics in wrestling these days. You almost always have to kiss somebody's --- to get anywhere, and I sure as hell ain't gonna kiss anything. I can wrestle here in the States, then when I get bored, I can head to Japan or somewhere and work there. Like I said, I'm doin' what I want to, and I see no reason to change!

The "Raging Bull" is ready for action!

HERCULES HERNANDEZ



CHRIS ADAMS

@wrestlingscans

CURT HENNIG

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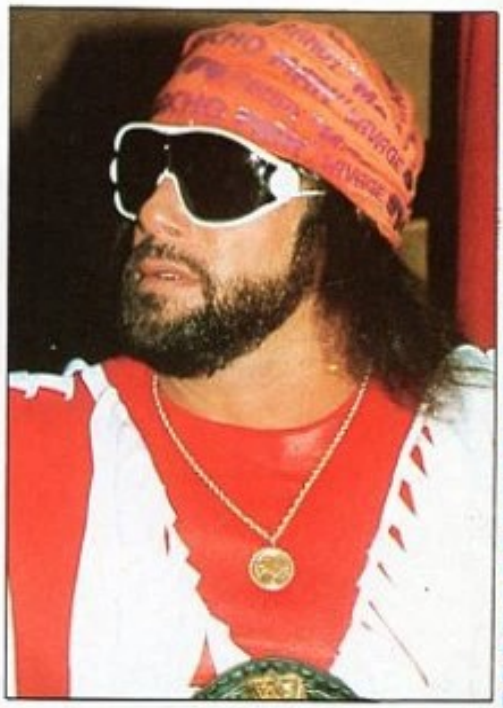
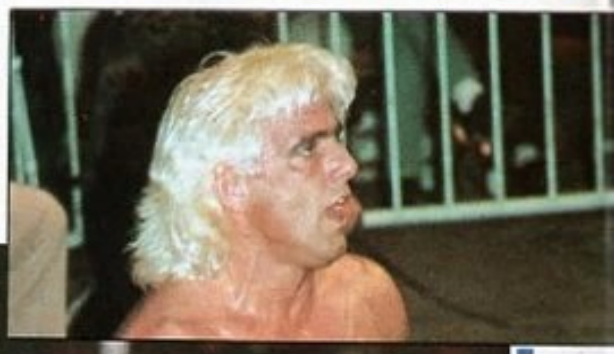
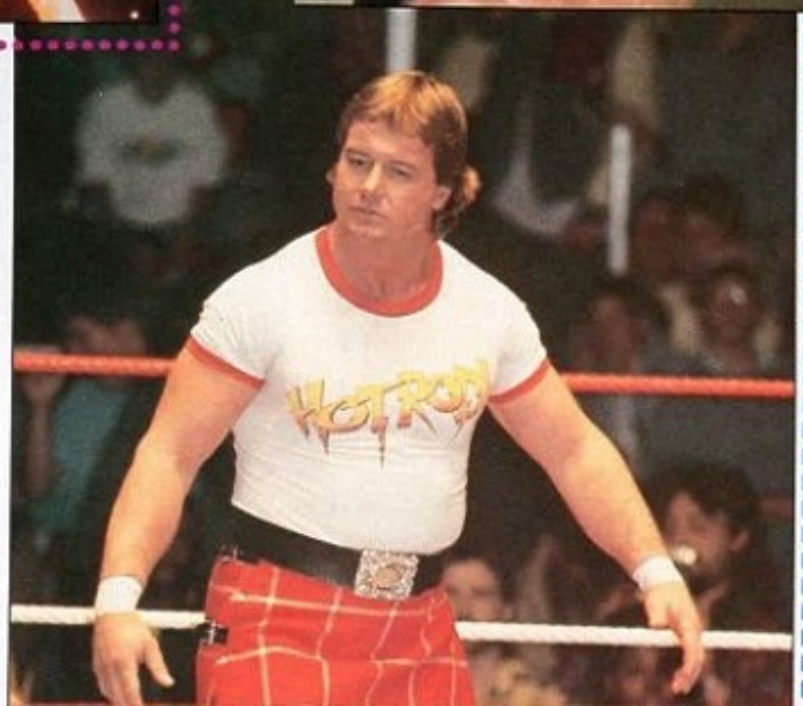
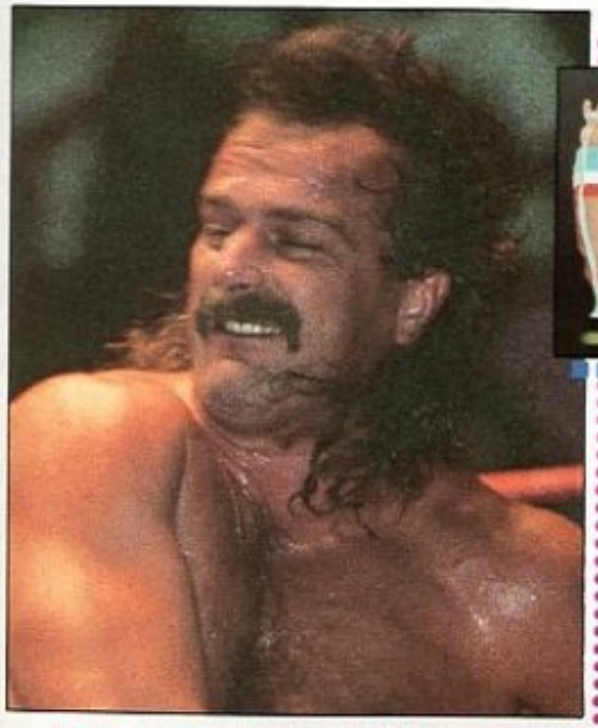


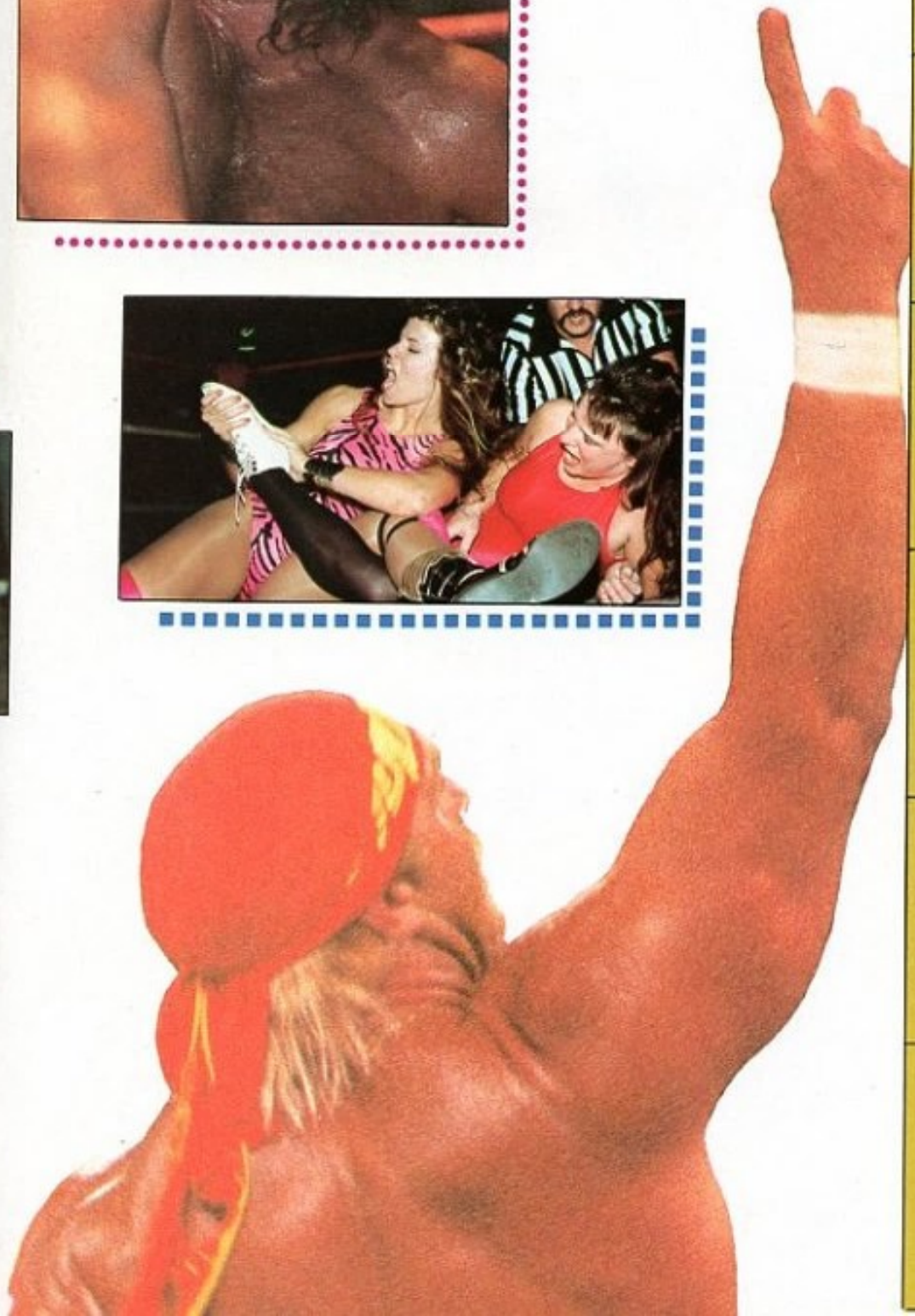




LOR CALENDAR

@wrestlingscans





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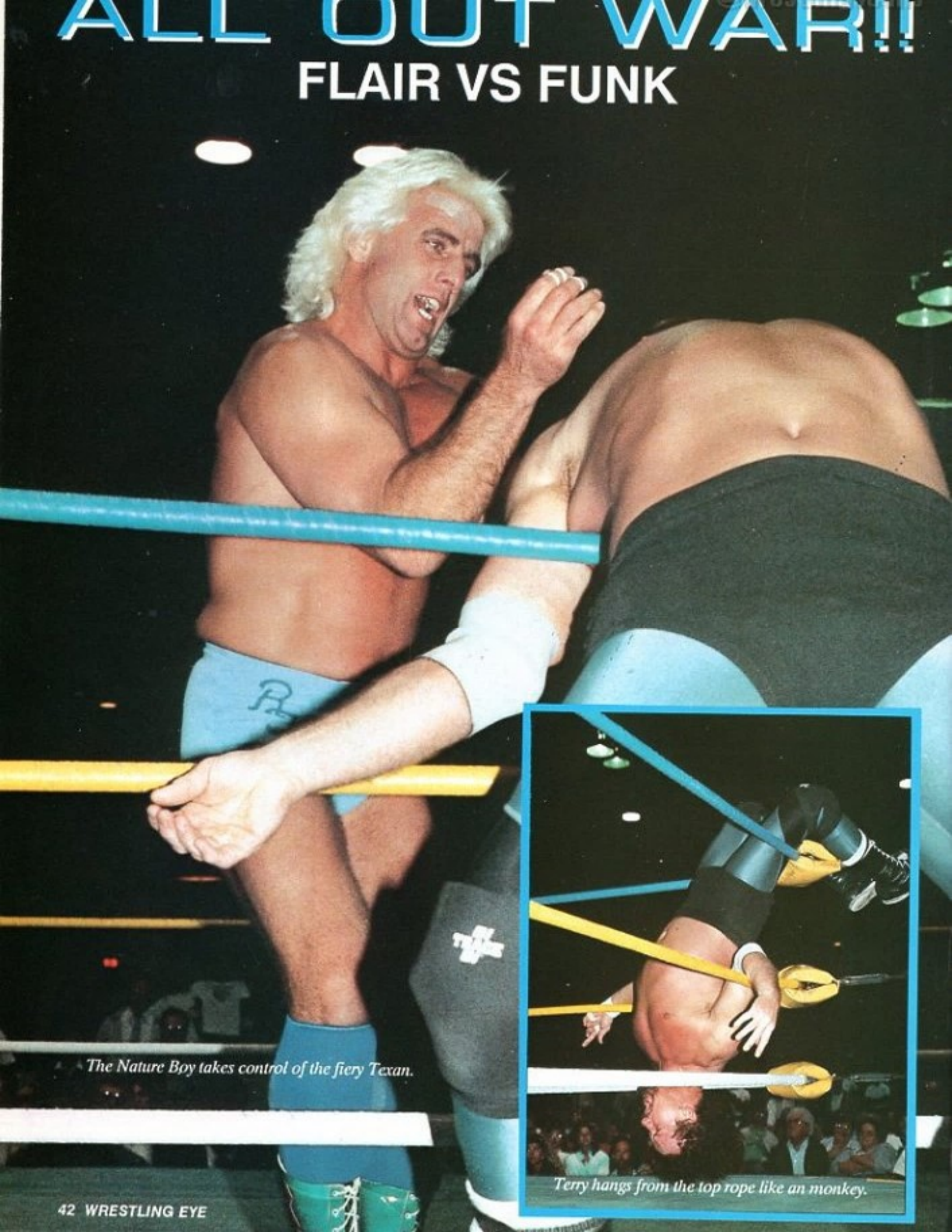
ALL OUT WAR!!

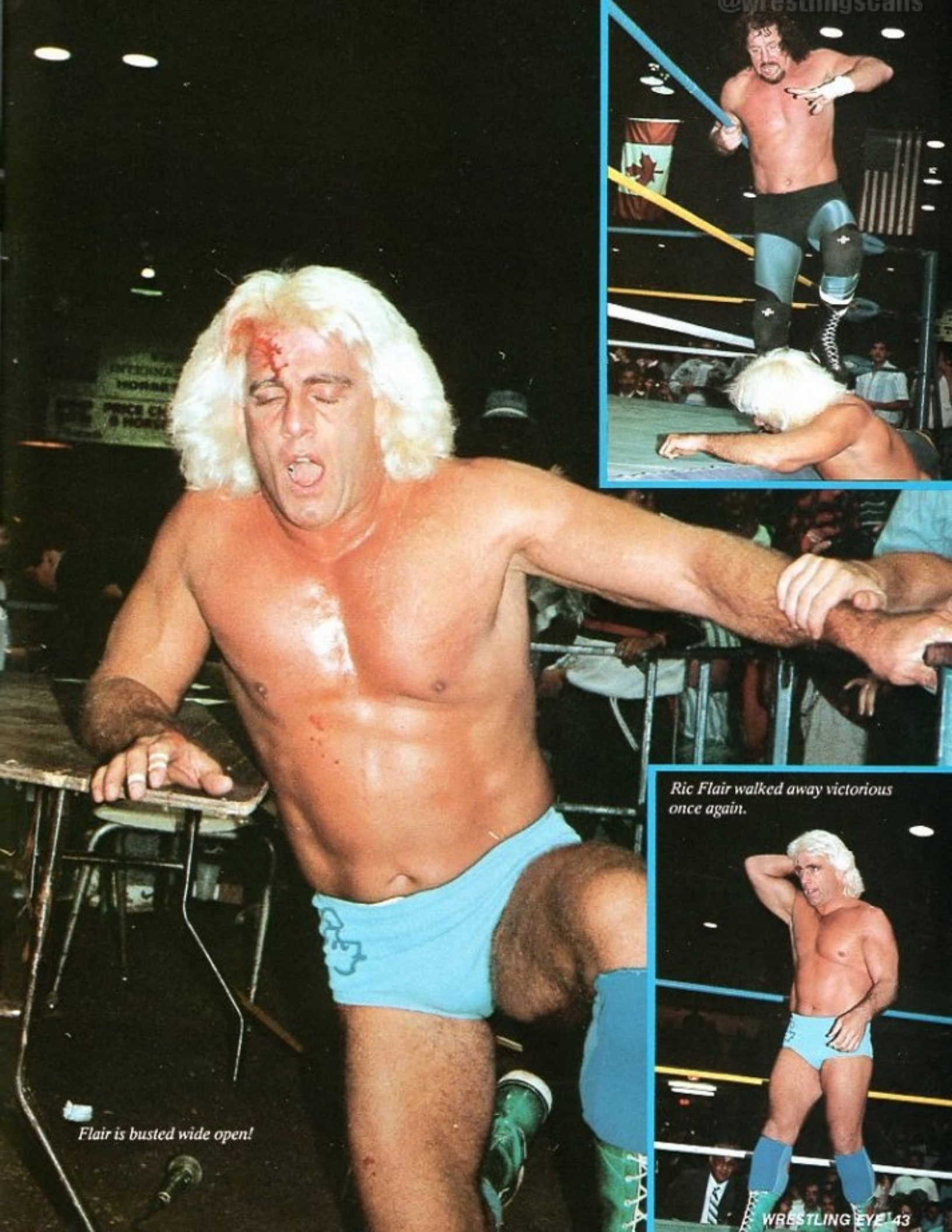
FLAIR VS FUNK



The Nature Boy takes control of the fiery Texan.

Terry hangs from the top rope like an monkey.

@wrestlingscans



Flair is busted wide open!

Ric Flair walked away victorious once again.

PAUL DIAMOND

THE AWA'S NEWEST HEARTTHROB

BY TOM CLUTTERS

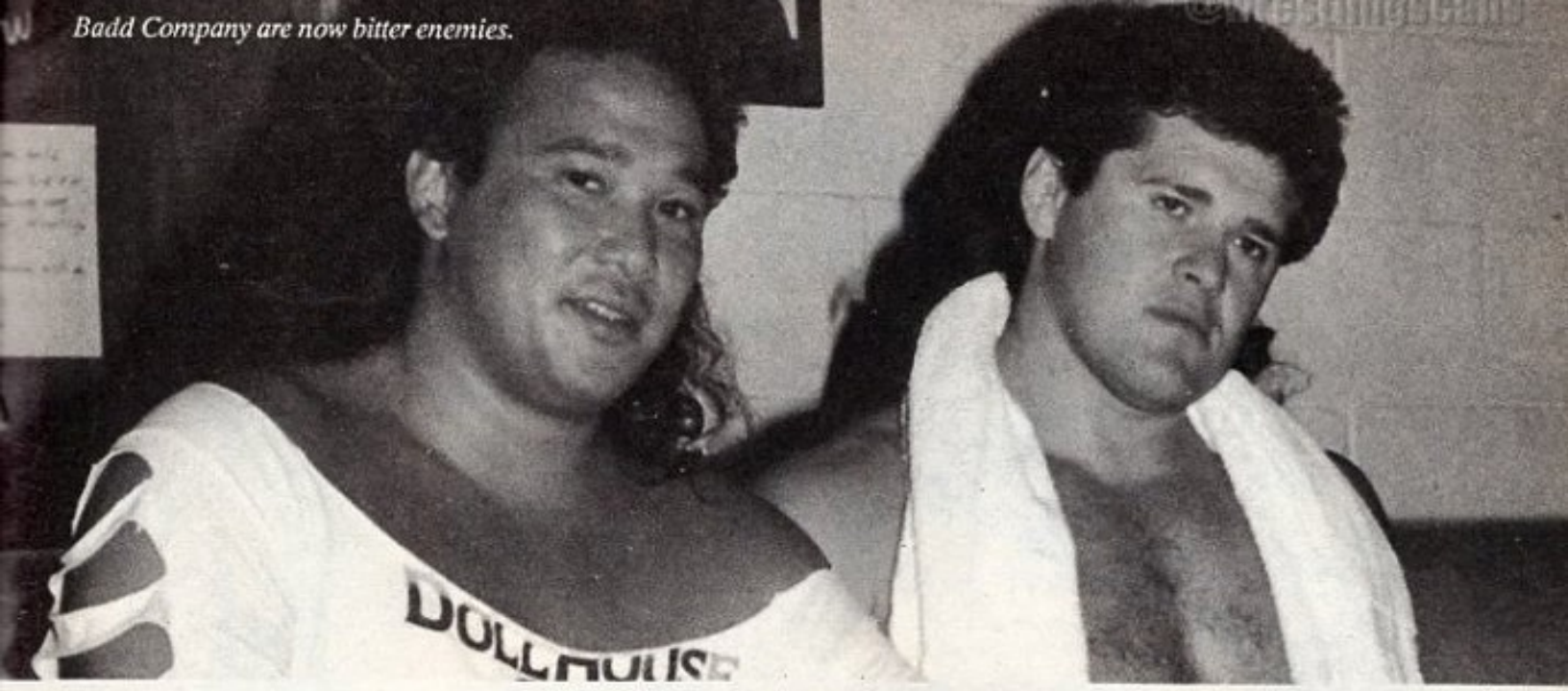
Paul saw ring action in the CWA. Here he battles Rip Rogers.

He's one of the many natives of Canada who have made their mark on the professional wrestling world. For the most part, Paul Diamond was an unknown to most mat fans before he and Pat Tanaka teamed together to win the AWA world tag team titles in March of 1988.

Since then, Diamond has remained in the AWA, but has switched from the rulebreaking tactics he and Tanaka employed during their title days, and he's now considered by many as the AWA's favorite "heartthrob". From the days of as one half of Badd Company, AWA tag team champions, to now, there has been quit a transformation in the career and the attitude of Paul Diamond.

"I must admit, those days with Pat as part of Badd Company were a big help in making a name for myself," says Diamond. "But it had to come to an end sometime, and now I'm making it on my own." Both Diamond, a 230-pounder and Tanaka, who usually weighs in around the 220 mark, were small by most wrestling standards, so they made up for their lack of size by working together so well and never giving up. "I don't believe that Badd Company ever got all the recognition we deserved," Diamond stated. "Because we were relatively small, no one really took us seriously until we became champions. I have had similar trouble throughout my career, but I'm a persistent person, and hey, there are plenty of different ways to get the job done."

Learning those different ways to handle opponents has been one of the keys to success for Paul Diamond. Depending on the size and ability of his foe, Paul has been known to either fly around the ring like a bird, hitting his opponent with dazzling maneuvers,or just getting "down and dirty" when necessary. "You can't stay with just one style of wrestling and expect to win for very long," he explained. "I change my style just about every night. There are some guys who

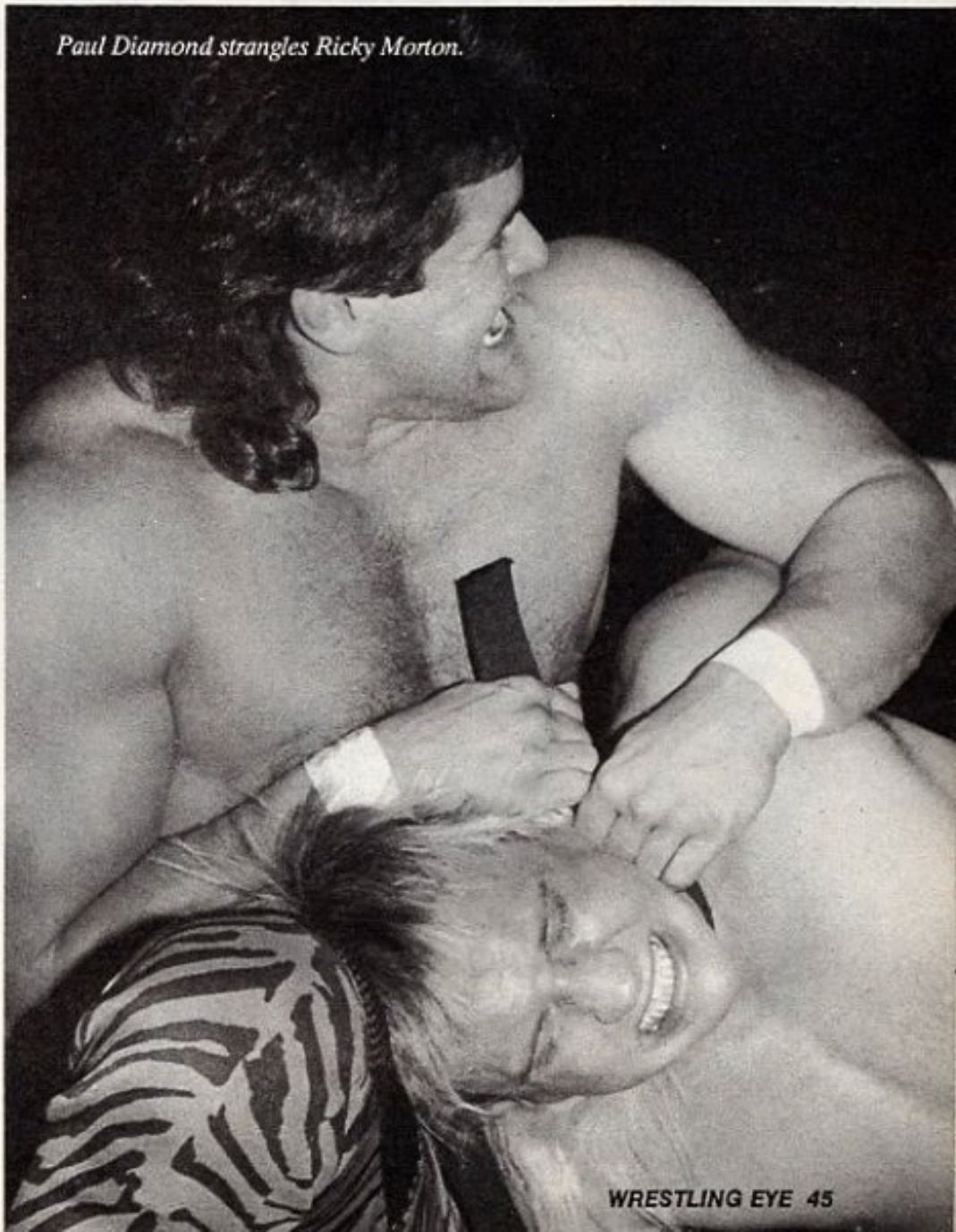


Badd Company are now bitter enemies.

fall with a dropkick or a flying press, and there are others you just have to slug it out with." Indeed, his time as a rulebreaker has served him well on occasion. No matter how hard you try, sometimes you just have to throw the rules out the window. "That's absolutely right," says Diamond. "I'll make every effort to wrestle someone with my ability, but if they want to make it a knock-down battle, I'll do that too!"

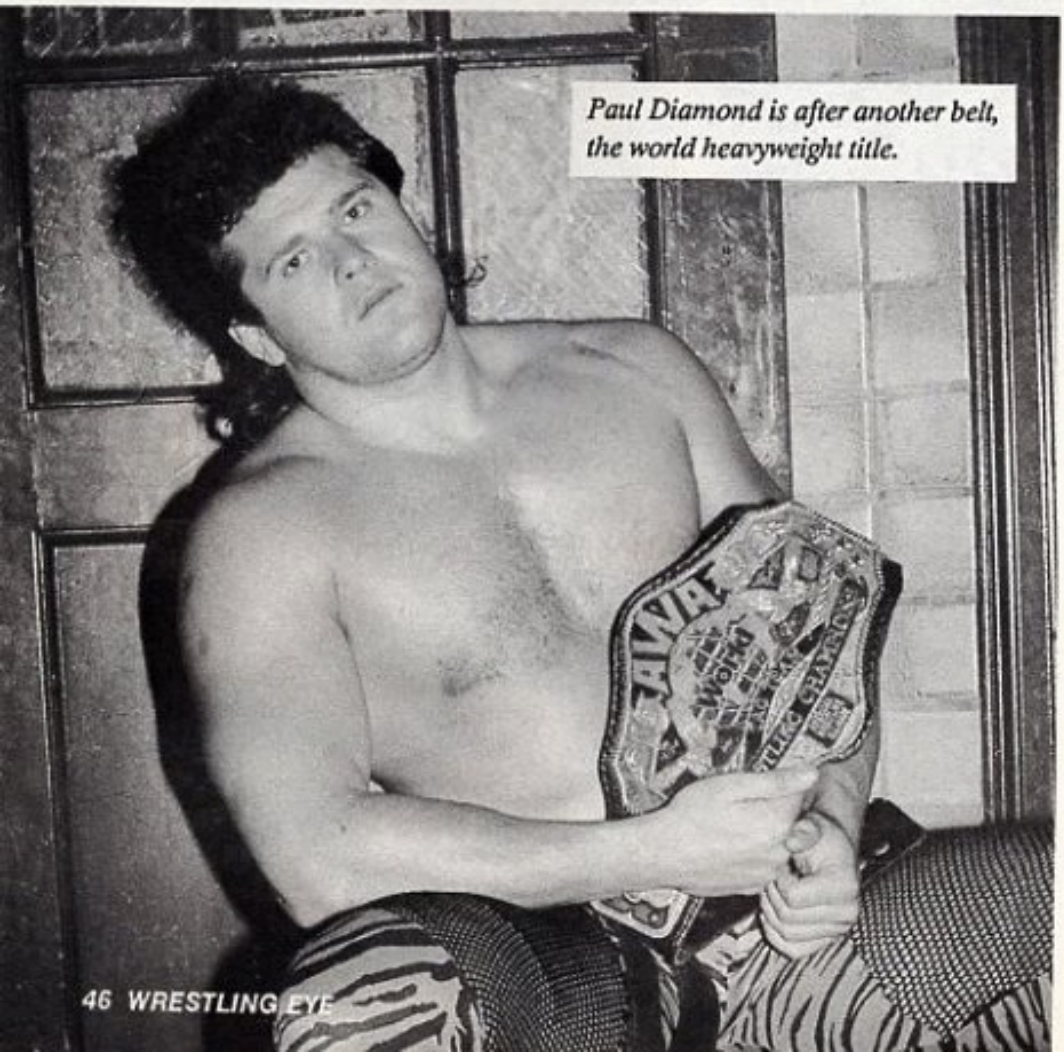
Diamond looks at his days with Badd Company as a real learning experience. Although every young wrestler makes mistakes while working his way up the ranks, Paul believes his biggest error was taking on a manager. "We won the AWA belts, by ourselves, without help. Then, Diamond Dallas Page came on to the scene, making all kinds of promises and we let him in. That was a major mistake." Diamond and Tanaka kept their titles for some time under Page's management but there was also tension surrounding the trio. "There were a lot of times when Page made it seem like he did all the work," recalls Paul. "Eventually, it turned into a competition between Pat and myself to try to get one up on the other, and it was this rivalry that eventually destroyed the team."

After parting ways with Tanaka and Diamond Dallas Page, Paul took some time to think things over. He decided to set out on his own in the AWA, to see if he could make it by himself. "It was a little scary at first when I decided to change my attitude. A lot of the guys I had been trying to


Paul Diamond strangles Ricky Morton.

@wrestlingscans

Paul is the AWA's current heartthrob.



Paul Diamond is after another belt, the world heavyweight title.

hurt for so long were cautious about accepting me. I didn't ask for anyone's help, since I knew I had to prove I was serious about changing. Fortunately, it all worked out."

It took quite some time for Diamond to work his way into a new circle of friends, but his desire to be accepted was strong so he never gave up. When Larry Zbyszko returned to the AWA and became world champion, it meant Paul Diamond had a target to shoot for. "Every wrestler would like to hold a world singles belt, and I'm no different," he admits. "Zbyszko is a tough customer, and he has years of experience against the best in the world. I've seen men like Greg Gagne and Sgt. Slaughter come up short against him, so I know I'm in for a real challenge. But if I get the chance, I guarantee he'll have his hands full with me."

As for his relationship with AWA fans, Diamond appreciates hearing the cheers instead of the boos. "I gave a lot of people plenty of reasons to dislike me in the past. "But now, most of them seem to support me, and that helps a lot when you're in the ring. I just hope they'll be even happier when I become AWA champion!"

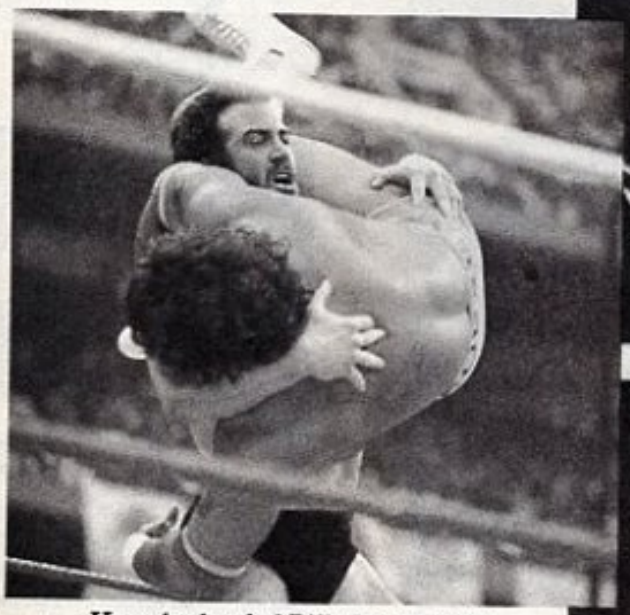
HERCULES

THE WWF'S SUPERMAN

BY DON LAIBLE

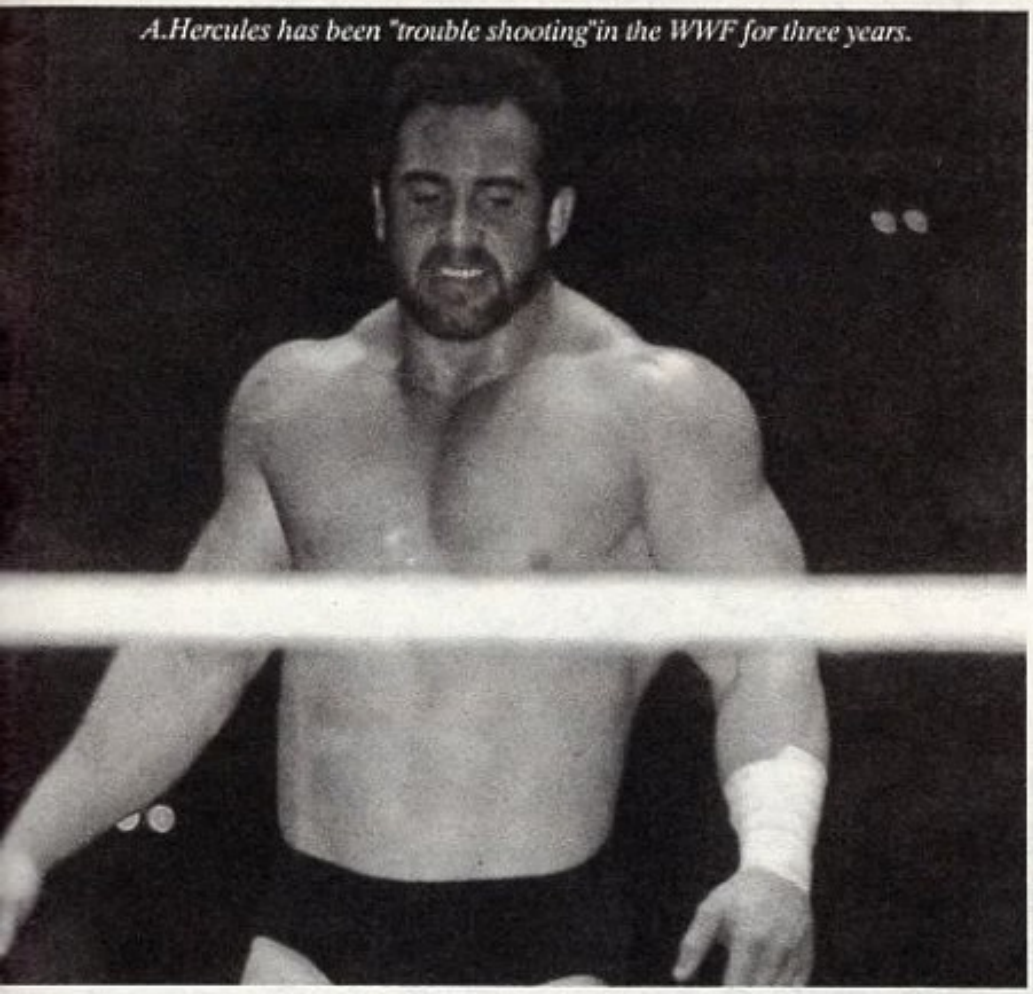
For more than a hundred years, slavery has been outlawed in the United States. Therefore, it was quite a shock when Hercules Hernandez found himself being "sold" as a slave by former manager Bobby "The Brain" Heenan. As he listened to Heenan confirm the deal with the Million Dollar Man, Ted DiBiase, Hercules was stunned. "He couldn't believe that Heenan and DiBiase would even try such a thing," said a friend of the Florida strongman. "To be honest, it caught him off guard. There was absolutely no hint of what was going on."

In trying to rekindle slavery at Hercules' expense, however, Heenan and DiBiase created a monster. Since the incident, Hernandez has been a terror to the WWF rulebreakers. After taking a measure of revenge against the Million Dollar Man and the Brain, Herc has moved on to challenge others associated with being on the "wrong" side of the talent roster. "It has become an obsession with him," the friend stated. "Anyone who might be remotely connected with



Hercules battled Billy Jack Haynes in Wrestlemania II.

How come this man hasn't held a title?



A.Hercules has been "trouble shooting"in the WWF for three years.

now, " Herc recalls. "I guess all his money finally went to his head."

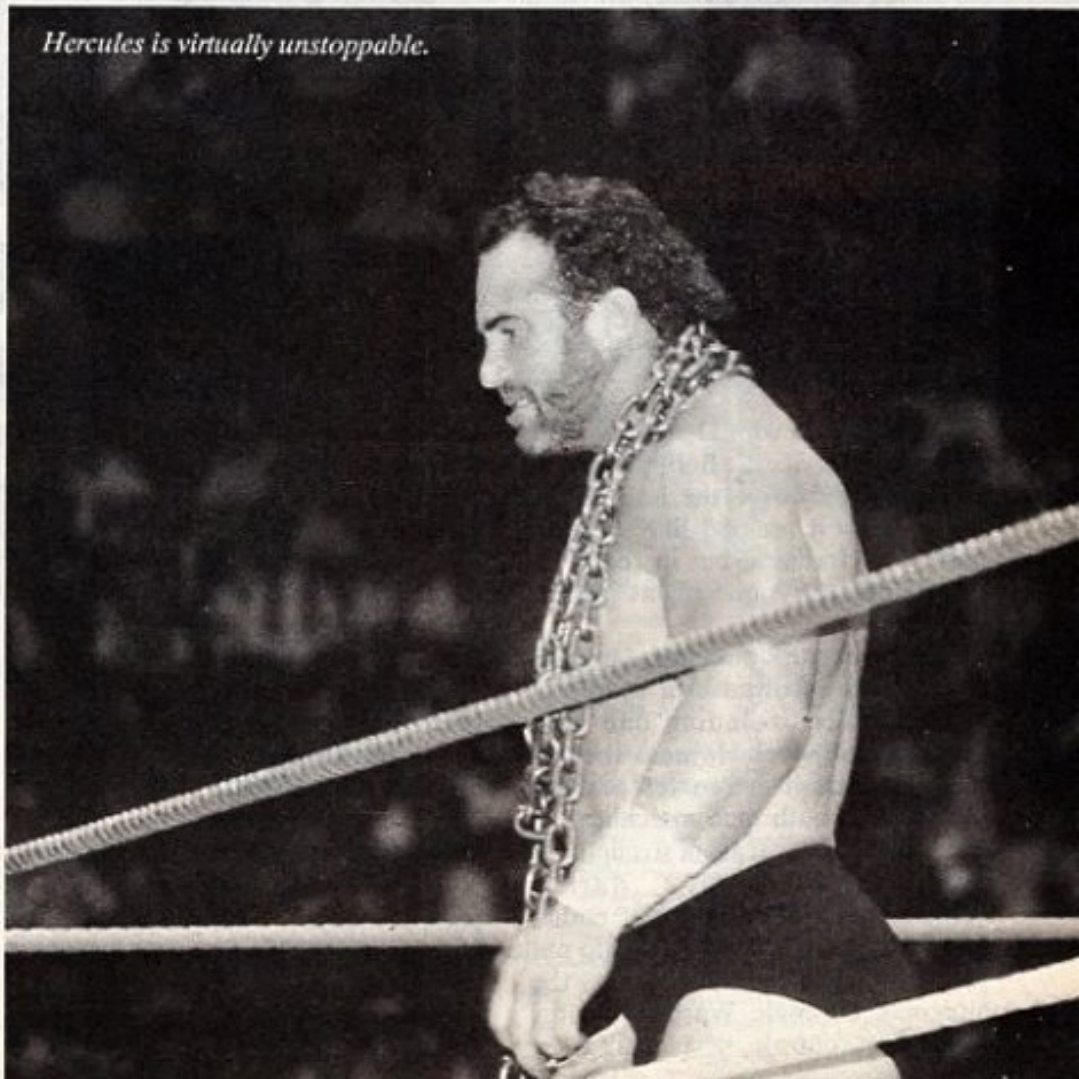
After leaving the Mid-South area, it was on to Texas and the World Class group for Hernandez. He was immediately recruited by Valerie "Sunshine" French in her campaign against WCCW rulebreakers and he made quite an impression on the Texas fans. "It was really something to watch this guy," said one long-time World Class fan. "He was probably the most powerful man we had ever seen at that point, and Sunshine got rid of quite a few of the bad guys."

Following a return to his native Florida, Hernandez defeated Brian Blair in May of 1985 for the Southern title. In a little over a month, under the guidance of Sir Oliver Humperdink, he pinned Hector Guerrero for the Florida belt. It wasn't long, however, before bigger things came his way. After accepting an offer from Freddie Blassie, Hercules vacated both his titles and went to the WWF. "It was the first time he had a chance to really go against the big boys," commented the friend. After Blassie's retirement, Hernandez came under contract to Slick, who

either Heenan or DiBiase just isn't safe."

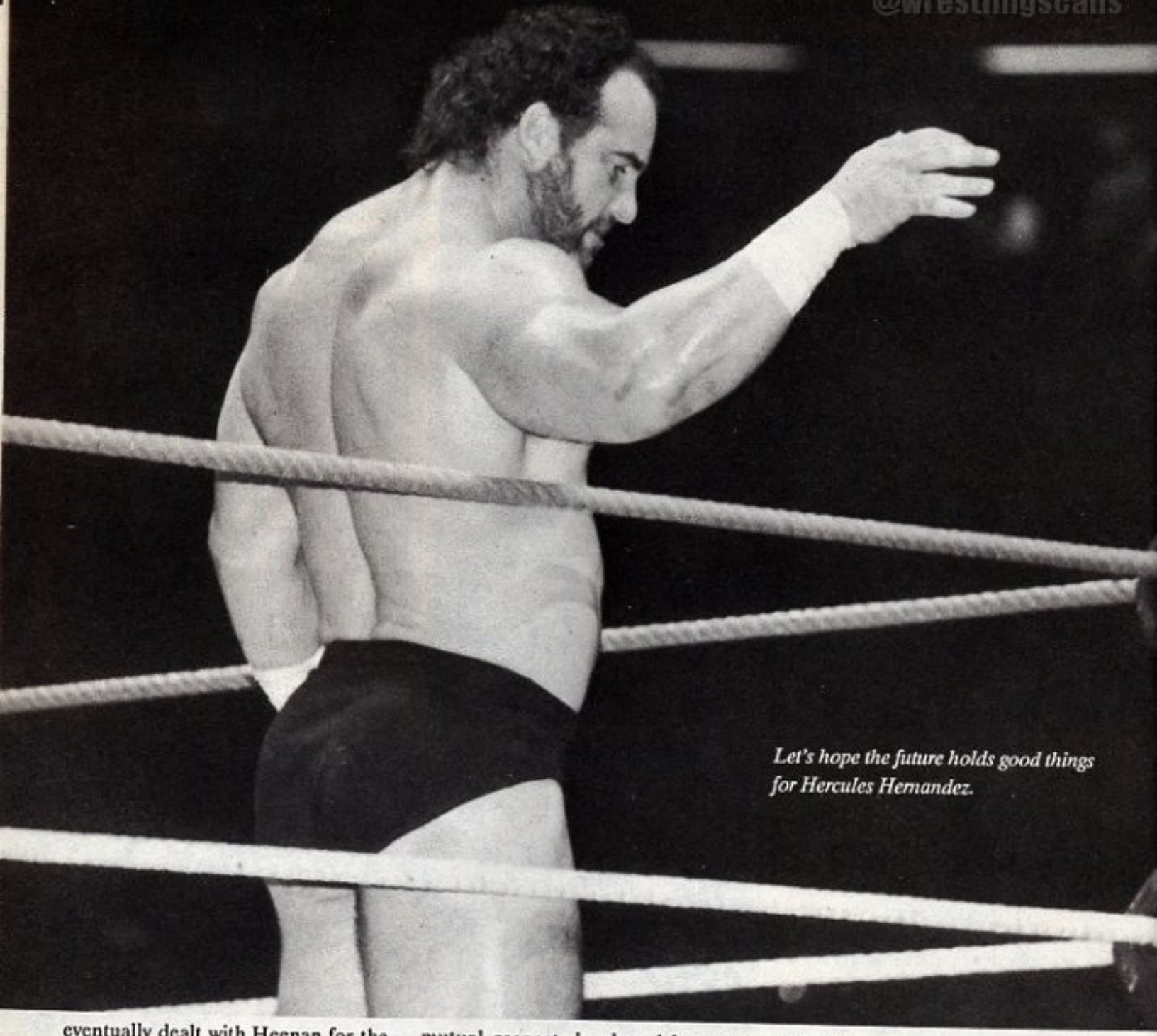
In his younger days, Ray Hernandez was dedicated to staying in shape and developing his incredible physique. In addition to spending endless hours lifting weights, he was the terror of his high school wrestling team. On many occasions, Hernandez chose to pummel his opponent rather than try for a pinfall. After deciding to turn pro, Hernandez came under the guidance of manager Gary Royal, and spent the first months of his career learning how to do things the professional way. After a time, the young powerhouse caught the attention of none other than Paul Jones. "When I first signed him, he was kind of raw, but he developed quickly" Jones recalls. Herc was put under a mask as one half of the Assassins tag team, but was eventually exposed by Jimmy Valiant during his long war against Paul Jones.

Jim Cornette was next to take on managerial duties for Hernandez. , who by now had moved into the highly competitive Mid-South area. In late 1984, he teamed with Ted DiBiase to win the area's tag belts. "Back then, DiBiase wasn't like he is



Hercules is virtually unstoppable.

@wrestlingscans



Let's hope the future holds good things for Hercules Hernandez.

eventually dealt with Heenan for the big man's services. Bobby Heenan was supposed to be the best in the business, so it seemed like an ideal move for Hercules, but in reality, it turned out to be one of his biggest mistakes.

Under Heenan's direction, Hernandez became involved in a couple of savage feuds, including one with Oregon's Billy Jack Haynes. It eventually came down to a contest of sheer power, with both men matching full nelsons and other feats of strength. A double count-out during Wrestlemania III effectively ended that feud, but Heenan decided to put his man on the offensive against the awesome Ultimate Warrior. After their first couple of meetings, a mutual respect developed between the two musclemen, but Heenan kept pushing his man into matches with the future Intercontinental champion. It was apparent that Hercules didn't have his heart in the feud, which eventually ended with a pinfall by the Warrior at Wrestlemania V.

Soon afterward, Heenan reportedly became disenchanted with Hercules and began laying the groundwork for his deal with DiBiase. The two attempted to consummate the deal on national television, but Hernandez put it all to rest with help of ever-present chain. "You just saw what kind of people Heenan and DiBiase are," Hercules said. "There's no place in today's world for slavery and I'll be damned if I'm gonna let 'em get by with it!"

Today, Hernandez enters the ring to the sound of cheers, and the future looks quite promising. His new friends, including men like Hulk Hogan, the Ultimate Warrior, Ronnie Garvin and Jim Neidhart have vowed to help him in his quest to rid the WWF of Heenan, DiBiase and their associates. Still another man who must keep a wary eye on Hercules is former WWF champion, Randy Savage., who has incurred the wrath of Hernandez on more than one occasion. "Here still hasn't forgotten about Savage," mentioned his friend. "They went at it pretty good some time ago, and I think it's just a matter of time before the "Macho King" is at the top of the list."

FAN CLUB COLUMN

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REVIEWS

MATWATCH: Steve Beverly, ED. 213 Pine Hills Ave, Auburn, Al 36830. Published weekly. $6.00 for 7 issues.

This newsletter really gives you an inside look at the sport. The information you get each week is top notch. This is a MUST for all serious fans of wrestling.

PRO WRESTLING TORCH: Wade Keller, ED. P.O. Box 201844, Minneapolis, Mn 55420. Published every two weeks. $1.25 per issue.

The writing and features of this publication really make it enjoyable and fun to read. The editor jam packs each issue with news, results, columns and features AND you also get a free color photo. Now c'mon, it just doesn't get any better than that!

GLOBAL WRESTLING NEWS SERVICE: Tom Burke, ED. 31 Groveland St, Springfield, Ma 01108. Published monthly. $1.50 per issue.

This one has been around for quite a while and one look will explain why. It's filled with newspaper clippings, results, news and nostalgia. Check this one out and see what you've been missing for so long.

THE WRESTLING REPORT: Greg Oliver, ED. 15 Penrose Ave, Kitchener, Ontario N2A 1E9. Published monthly. $1.00 per issue.

This entry from Canada has all the makings of a fine publication. There is news, results, and nostalgia in each issue. Order a copy today and support this fine bulletin.

WRESTLING STYLE NEWSLETTER: Jim Dough, ED. 6024 Cipriano Rd., Lanham, Md 20706 Published weekly. $.75 per issue.

This newcomer offers predictions and news. Have to see a few more issues before giving it a recommendation.

TWIN CITIES WRESTLING UPDATE: Kris Pope, ED. P.O. Box 31114, Minneapolis, Mn 55431. Published monthly. $2.50 per issue.

This regional fanzine is a beautifully laid out piece of work that will keep you up to date on the latest in the Twin Cities area. Take a look today, you won't be sorry!

WRESTLING HOTLINE: Lori Joyce, ED. 54 Kentish Crescent, Agincourt, Ontario, M1S 2Z4 Canada. Published monthly. $2.00 per issue.

This one covers every federation in an in-depth manner. The editor has a crisp writing style that will hold your interest and keep you coming back for more. Order a copy today.

THE RING POST: Francesco Castano, ED. 13135 Colton Lane, Gaithersburg, Md 20878. Published bimonthly. $.50 per issue.

Here's another newcomer that shows a lot of promise. The editor covers the WWF, NWA, AWA and World Class with match results and news. Looking forward to further issues, but the first one looks good.

GLOBAL MAT INFO: David Howell, ED. 1868 Newfield Ave, Stamford, Ct 06903. Published monthly. $1.50 per issue.

The computer graphics on this bulletin make it easy and enjoyable to read. Ratings, news clippings and photos round our this fine publication. Definitely recommended.

THE PILEDRIVER: Honorable J.D. Woodall, ED. 1707 Alabama, Big Spring, Tx 79720. Published monthly. $.75 per issue.

All major federations are covered here and the editor makes every effort to keep you on top of things. Well, it works and you'll also enjoy the breezy style. Get your copy today.

THE PWD/RINGSIDE REFLECTOR: J.D. McKay, ED. Rte 2, Box 291, Louisville, Ms 39339. Published monthly. $2.00 per issue.

The features and writing in this bulletin are really first rate. You'll look forward to receiving your copy every month just to read what the editor and columnists have to say. In short, this is a top notch publication all the way.!

PEN PALS

KIKU ISHII-Age 26, 27-21 Higashikoiwa 4 chrome, Edogawa-Ku, Tokyo, 133 Japan would like to hear from fans who like Terry Funk, Dick Slater, Great Muta and the Rock

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BETTY ANN GARCIA-Age 24, P.O.Box 1087, Menard, Tx 76859 wants to hear from fans of the Von Erichs, Magnum TA, Barry and Kendall Windham, Rockers, Scott and Rick Casey and Al Perez. Will try to answer all letters.

JANDI MURPHY-Age 20, P.O. Box 212, Fulton, Mo 65251 would like to hear from fans of Sting, Roddy Piper, Brutus Beefcake and the Rock 'n Roll Express.

GERLINDA TRENT-Age 22, P.O. Box 102, Piney Flats, Tn 37686 would like to hear from fans of Ric Flair, Kerry Von Erich, Sting, Lex Luger, Wendall Colley and Ron Ritchie. Will answer all letters.

BRIAN GARDNER-138 Ashdale, West Covina, Ca 91790 would like to hear from those who like Randy Savage, Curt Hennig and Don Muraco and those who HATE Hulk Hogan and Dusty Rhodes.

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Champ-Hulk Hogan

1. Ultimate Warrior
2. Randy Savage
3. Rick Rude
4. Dusty Rhodes
5. The Widowmaker
6. Brutus Beefcake
7. Curt Hennig
8. Andre the Giant
9. Bret Hart
10. Jim Duggan
11. Ted DiBiase
12. Jimmy Snuka
13. Honkytonk Man
14. Hercules
15. Rick Martel

N.W.A.
Champ-Ric Flair

1. Lex Luger
2. Sting
3. Terry Funk
4. Great Muta
5. Rick Steiner
6. Mike Rotunda
7. Michael Hayes
8. Scott Steiner
9. Steve Williams
10. Brian Pillman
11. Scott Hall
12. Norman the Lunatic
13. Dick Slater
14. Ranger Ross
15. Tom Zenk

C.W.F.

1. Jimmy Golden
2. Wendall Cooley
3. Danny Davis
4. Adrian Street
5. Dennis Condrey
6. Ron Fuller
7. Keith Hart
8. Lou Fabiano
9. Jerry Stubbs
10. Grant Jackson

N.C.W.

1. Johnny Rodz
2. Sgt. Slaughter
3. The Cheetah Kid
4. Iron Mike Sharpe
5. Tommy Norton
6. Afa the Wild Samoan
7. Tom Brandi
8. Johnny Valiant
9. S.D. Jones
10. Sika the Wild Samoan

I.C.W.

1. Joe Savoldi
2. Kendall Windham
3. Tony Atlas
4. Stever Keirn
5. Chris Michaels
6. Brian Walsh
7. Mr. X.
8. Eric Saphrasia
9. Vic Steamboat
10. Tony Rumble

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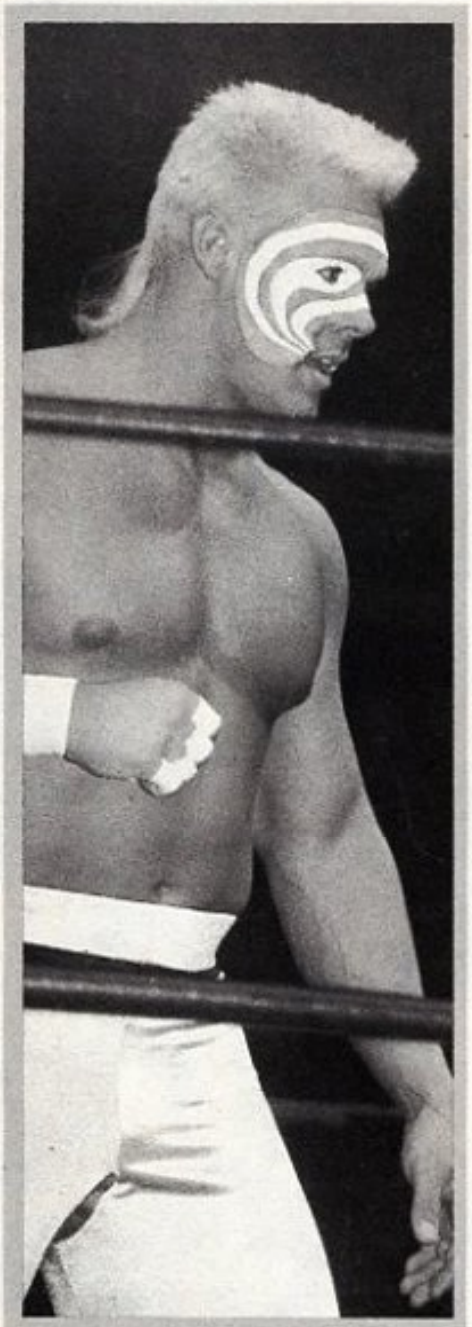


A.W.A.
Champ-Larry Zbyszko

1. Sgt. Slaughter
2. Greg Gagne
3. Paul Diamond
4. Ken Patera
5. Col. DeBeers
6. Kokina
7. Mike George
8. Brad Rheingans
9. Derrick Dukes
10. Johnny Stewart

WORLD CLASS

1. Kerry Von Erich
2. Eric Embry
3. Cactus Jack Manson
4. Chris Adams
5. Taurus Bulba
6. Jeff Jarrett
7. Gary Young
8. Jimmy Jack Funk
9. Matt Borne
10. The Punisher

WORLD WOMEN'S

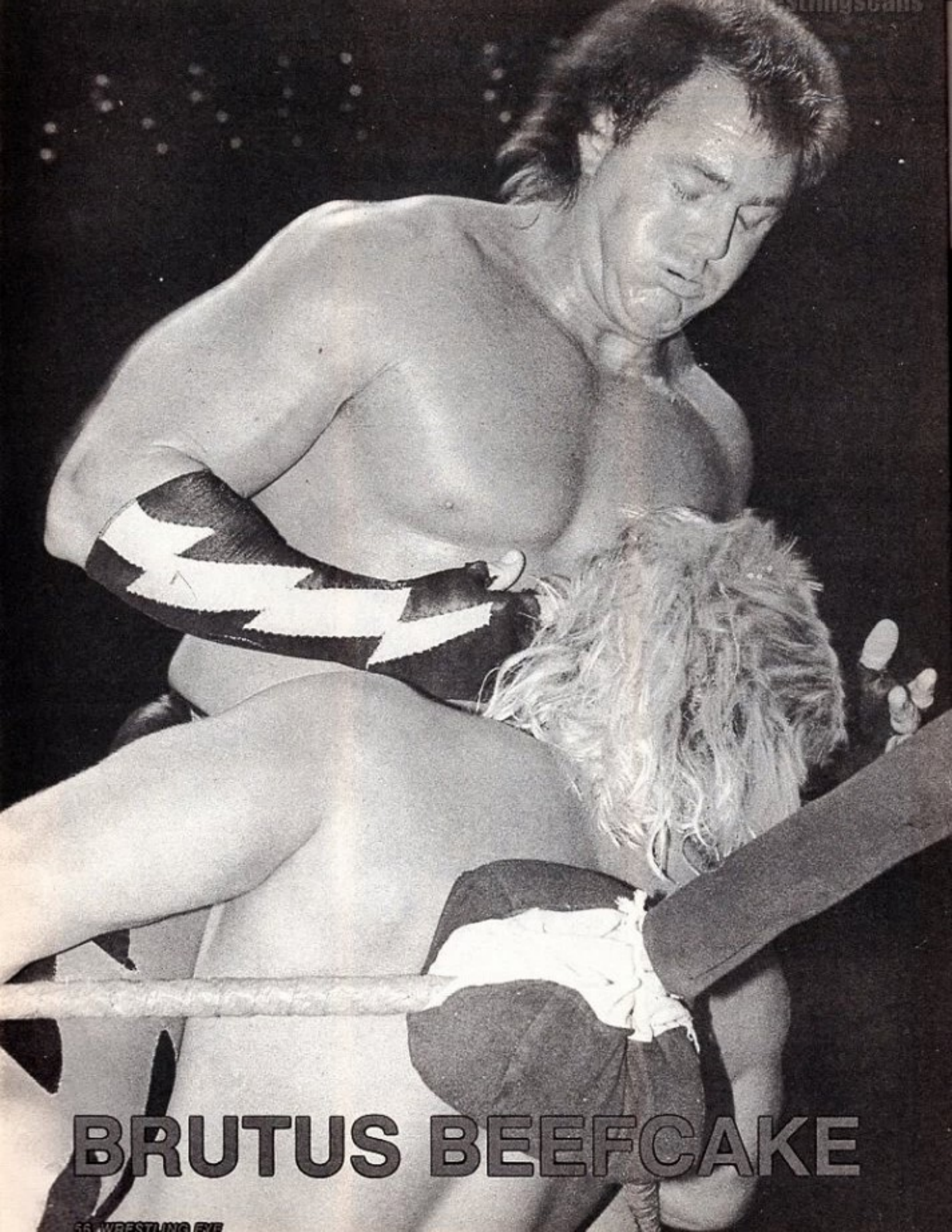
1. Wendi Richter
2. Misty Blue
3. Linda Dallas
4. Madusa Miceli
5. Sue Sexton
6. Kat Leroux
7. Heidi Lee Morgan
8. Candi Divine
9. Susan Green
10. Debbie Combs

TOP 15 TAG TEAMS

1. Demolition
2. The Rockers
3. The Road Warriors
4. The Freebirds
5. The Destruction Crew
6. The Dynamic Dudes
7. SST
8. The Olympians
9. Hart Foundation
10. The Bushwackers
11. The Steiner Brothers
12. The Skyscrapers
13. Lane & Eaton
14. New Zealand Militia
15. The Cream Team

TOP 15 (rated by ability)

1. Ric Flair
2. The Widowmaker
3. Sting
4. Lex Luger
5. Randy Savage
6. Curt Hennig
7. Bret Hart
8. Terry Funk
9. Arn Anderson
10. Tully Blanchard
11. The Great Muta
12. Genichiro Tenryu
13. Marty Jannetty
14. Brian Pillman
15. Larry Zbyszko



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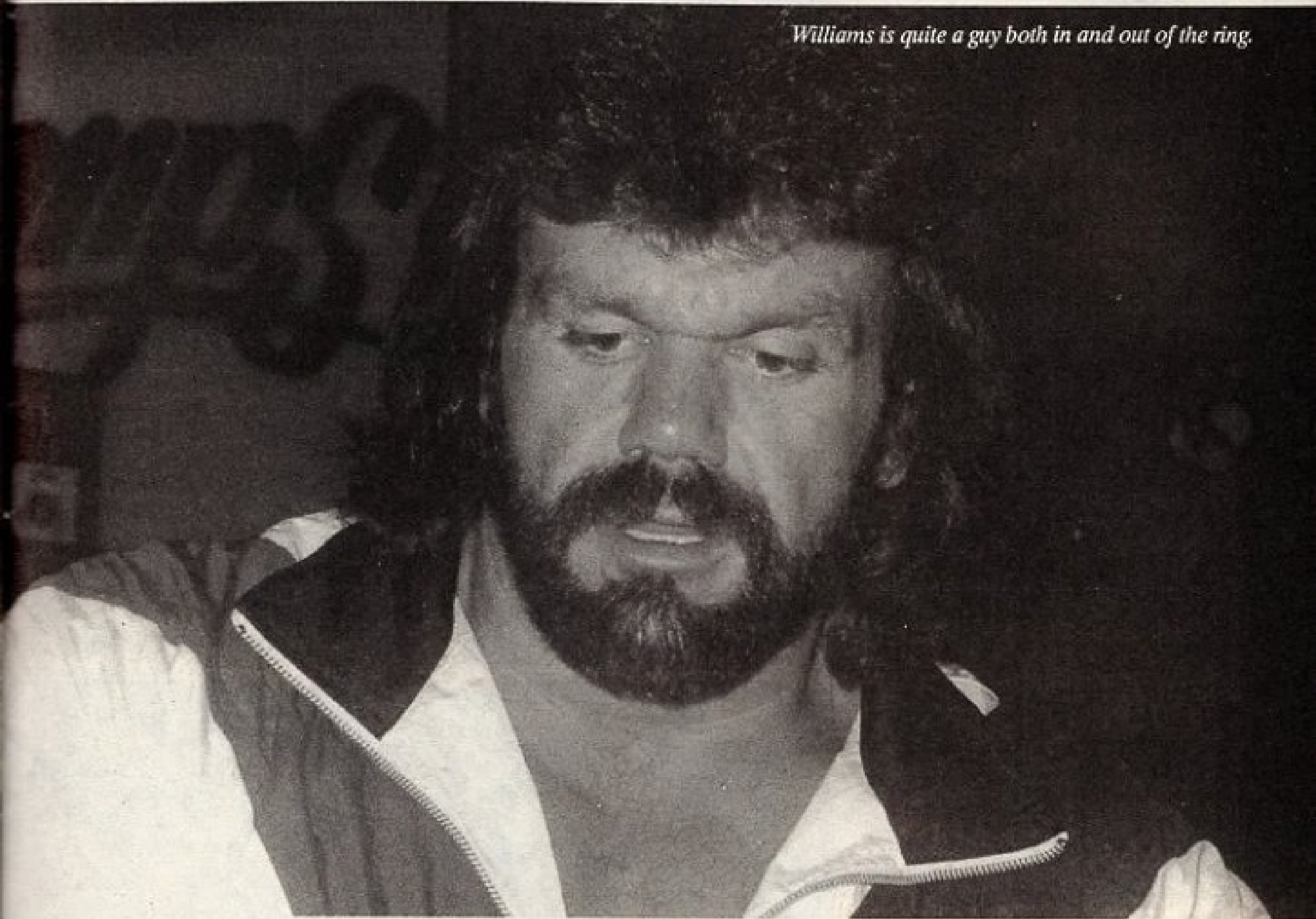
STEVE WILLIAMS

A CANDID CHAT WITH THE DOCTOR



Williams is quite a guy both in and out of the ring.

BY ALAN RASKIN

Back in mid-1986, "Dr. Death" Steve Williams had defeated Freebird Terry Gordy for the UWF World Heavyweight title. In a post-match celebration, Williams showed more emotions and feelings than you'd expect to see from a guy who bills himself as "the toughest man in wrestling".

August 1989, "Doc" had just completed a time limit draw with the NWA U.S. Heavyweight champ, Lex Luger. Williams had the match under control. Luger, sweating and breathless, was kneeling in the corner, trying to recover from three devastating press slams. Doc, smelling gold, rushed at Luger and attempted to "Stampede" him. However, due to a slight miscalculation, Steve's ribs made full contact with the iron ringpost instead of Luger. Williams never recovered completely and Lex Luger remained the U.S. Heavyweight champ.

Yes, Steve Williams has certainly had a career full of ups and downs, Recently, WRESTLING EYE caught up with him to discuss his past, present and future:

****
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WE: What was the deal concerning the NWA and UWF unification match (against Ric Flair) that never happened?

SW: Well, let's just say that there was a lot of politics involved. Basical-

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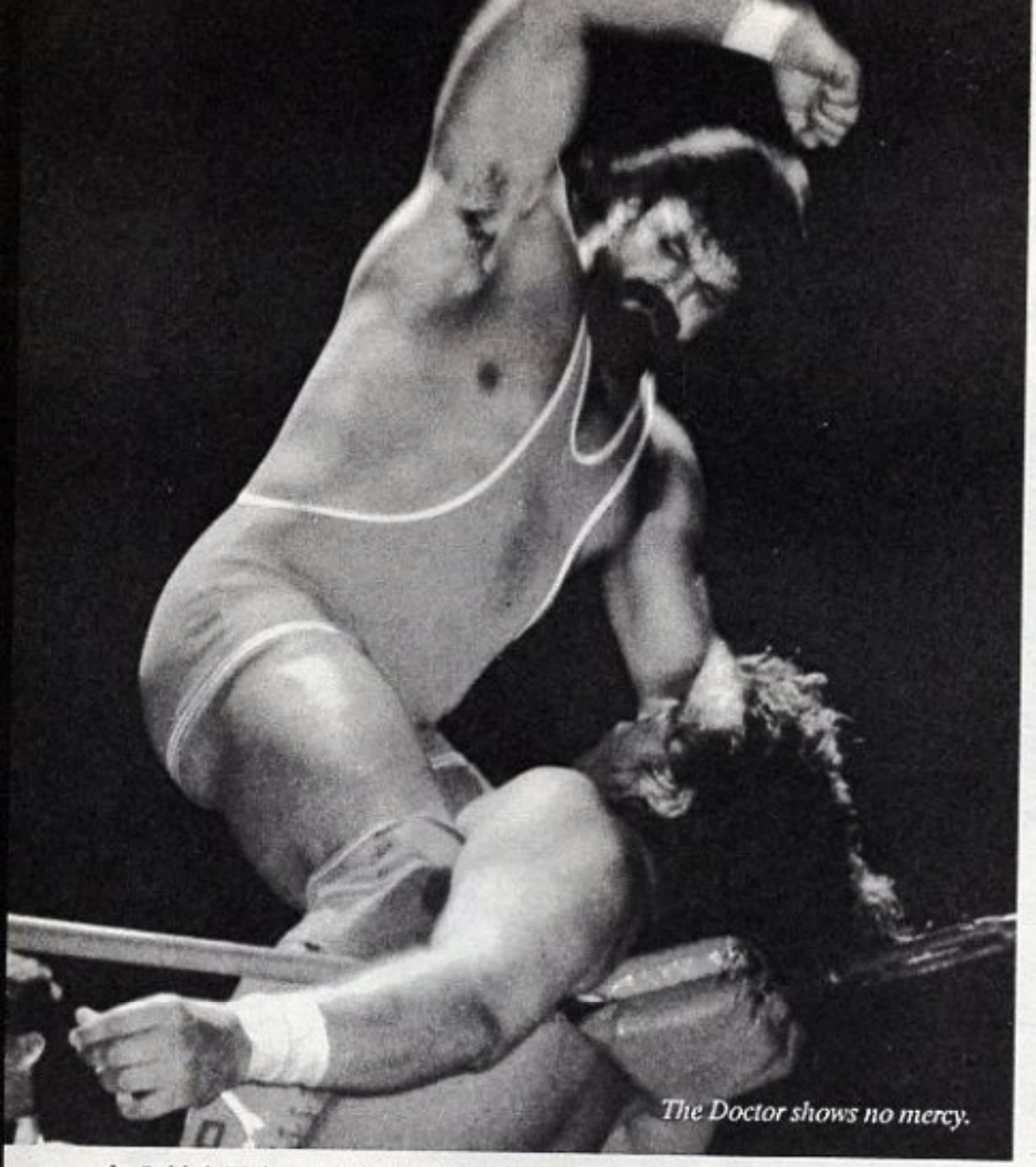


The Doctor shows no mercy.

ly, I think Flair was afraid to face me. The UWF belt is retired in my showcase at home.

WE: You were pretty friendly with Barry Windham. What do you think about his move to the WWF?

SW: Money talks. Besides, Barry was never really treated right in the NWA. I guess he felt a little lost in the shuffle. Then, when Barry injured his wrist, the NWA gave him six months to heal. I guess Barry did some thinking in that time and decided not to come back.

WE: Let's talk for a minute about your match with Lex Luger when you were after the U.S, Heavyweight title. Did you really feel that you had him beat?

SW: When I wrestle a man like Ric Flair or Lex Luger, I need at least a sixty minute match to wear him down. I'll tell you one thing though, Luger was mine until I hurt my ribs. But then, I couldn't throw correct punches or get my weight behind any of my moves. Yeah, if my ribs weren't hurt, I'd have beaten him for sure.

WE: Do you plan to stay in the NWA?

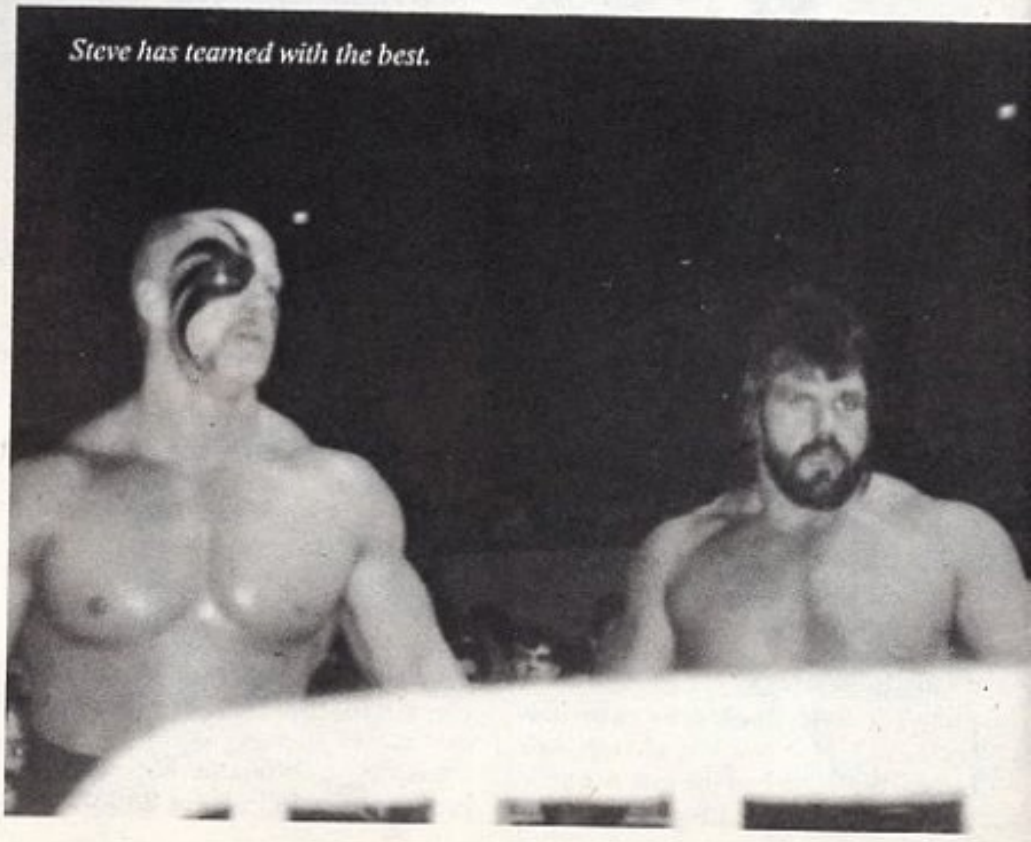
SW: Yeah, for as long as I wrestle in the States. I like the style of wrestling in the NWA. Eventually though, I plan to work pretty much exclusively in Japan. There's a lot of opportunity there and I'll have plenty of time to spend with my family. I'll tell ya, the hospitality in Japan is unreal, you really get he full red carpet treatment. Besides, Gordy's in Japan and I want to get my hands on him.

WE: What's your next move? Are you going after a single or tag title, since you've recently been seen wrestling with the Midnight Express?

SW: Plain and simple, I want to be World Champion. But, until the NWA and Ted Turner realize what kind of an athlete I am, what can I do? With all I've accomplished, I feel I should get a title shot. I'm just waiting for Flair to sign the contract. Also, I don't want a fifteen minute match, I want a whole hour. I guess, like Flair, I get better as the match goes on. I've been wrestling in, and playing in sixty minute football games all of my life, so I know how to gear up, to get better as times goes on.

WE: What's the real story behind your leaving the Varsity Club?

SW: Kevin Sullivan just couldn't keep his promises; a couple of things



Steve has teamed with the best.

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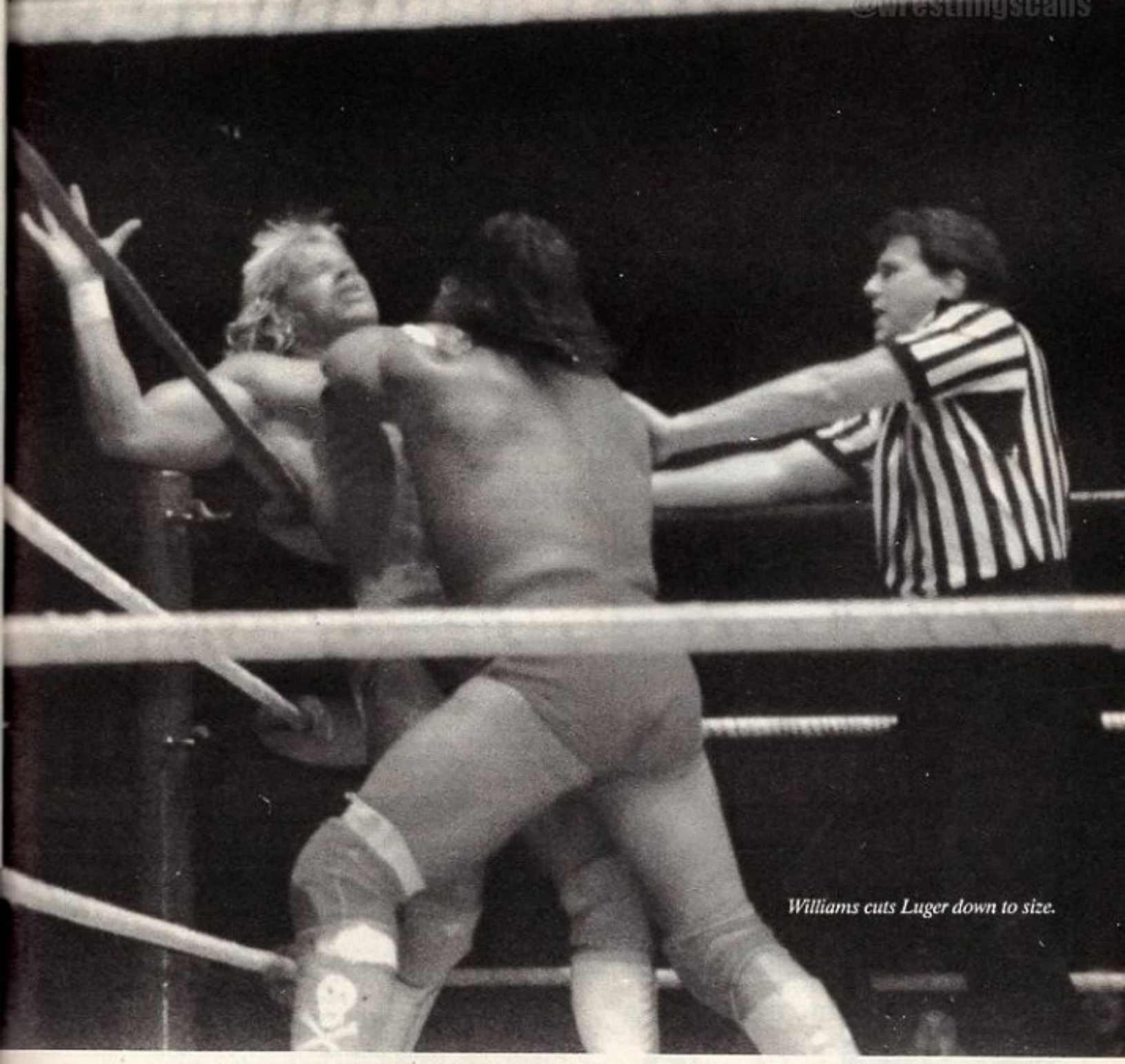

Williams cuts Luger down to size.

he said he would do for me never happened. I guess you could say that I also like being my own man - I don't need a manager or a tag team partner telling me what to do.

WE: When Terry Gordy returns from Japan, do you have any plans for six man tags against the Freebirds?

SW: If I don't have plans, I'll make plans. I intend to kick his butt all over this country!

WE: (Steve started adjusting himself in the chair. It was quite apparent that his ribs were bothering him) Steve, is this your worst injury?

SW: Well, if it isn't it runs a pretty close second to the time I was wrestling Brad Armstrong in Shreveport, La. I gave him a clothesline and his elbow flipped up and caught me in the eye. I was cut in five places around my eye and I took 108 stitches. The worst part was, back then, I had to go out and wrestle the next night. At least today I'd get a week off.

WE: Would ever consider going to the WWF instead of Japan?

SW: No, unless there was an awful lot of money involved. The WWF wrestles differently than the style I'm used to and I don't think McMahon can offer me what Japan can. Presently, my contract with the NWA expires Feb 15, 1990 and I think it's pretty safe to say that I'll be in Japan after that. I have an 8 year old daughter who I want to watch grow up.

With that, Williams got up and headed for the door. This "tough guy", walking around with his cracked ribs, seemed almost too cooperative to be called "Dr. Death". However, if Flair decides to give a shot, don't sell Williams short. The "toughest man in wrestling" knows how to "gear it up" when the money is on the line. Just ask Lex Luger or Terry Gordy.

PHANTOM of the ring

Rumors abound that Luger is talking with the WWF.

Howdy! After being threatened by one of most vicious tag teams in wrestling, I'm back! (Guess Who?!) Well, anyway, I sit here with a neck brace on, but I still think I could have beat those two muscle-bound goons! Anyway, on to business... This past Fall, wrestling fans were treated to a terrific battle between **Ric Flair** and **Terry Funk**. From cage matches in Philadelphia to "I Quit" matches in Troy, NY, **Flair/Funk** has to be one of the most entertaining feuds of all time...WWF referee **Joey Morella** was seriously injured in an automobile accident. **Joey** is the son of **Gorilla Monsoon**. Anyway, as of press time, **Joey** was still recuperating in a New Jersey hospital...The WWF just returned from a European tour. London did exceptionally well with a **Savage - Hogan** main event. Tickets for the show ranged from $18.00 to $45.00. Boy, people sure are starved for entertainment in Europe!!!...**Akira Maeda** has been negotiating to wrestle the world boxing champ, **Mike Tyson**. As most of you probably know, **Akira** is the U.W.F.World champ in Japan. In my opinion, he is also one of the greatest wrestlers to hit the squared circle today. Think about it, if **Hulk Hogan** took one of **Maeda's** kicks in the mouth, he'd probably retire! Anyway, **Maeda** is negotiating with **Tyson**, but whether anything will come of it is anybody's guess. Maybe **Tyson** feels he's run out of quality boxing contenders so it's time to try a wrestler instead!...**New advisor/managerial assistant to the Great Muta is the Dragon Master (Kasuo Sakurada) aka Kendo Nagasaki. The Dragon Master walks to the ring backwards. I'm sure he'll** give that up when he trips and breaks his neck!...Heard that the **Skyscrapers** are talking with the WWF. **Vince** could sure use these guys as **Demolition** is sorely lacking some quality competition for the belts. Also, **Sid Vicious** is simply awesome. Can't you just imagine him and the **Ultimate Warrior** as a tag team?!...**The Widowmaker** (Barry Windham) has been out of action lately due to an operation he underwent to remove a benign tumor beneath his breast bone. He should be completely recovered by the time you read this...**Bret Hart** is another name on the injured list. **Bret** was hospitalized in Toronto after a match against **Dino Bravo**. **Bravo** threw

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Bret out of the ring, and he went sailing into a steel barricade. Reports state that he suffered a ruptured spleen and a few bruised ribs. We wish him a speedy recovery...The AWA matches pitting **Paul Diamond** against **Pat Tanaka** have really been great. Maybe it'll give that promotion the shot in the arm that it so desperately needs. Also, catch the **Ric Flair/Bobby Eaton** bouts. They're bound to go down as classics in the history of the sport...Rumors are flying from the NWA front office that **Terry Funk** will be retiring within the month. Ridiculous, I say. If you remember, **Terry** "retired" once before from the WWF! I think **Terry** will be wrestling till the day he dies. Hats off to ya!...**Antonio Inoki** was seriously injured during a speech he gave in Aizuwakamatsu, Japan. As you know, **Inoki** holds a political office. He was stabbed at a political rally from his ear to his throat. Inoki lost a lot of blood but reports tell us he is recovering. However, it will quite a while before **Antonio** Inoki sees the inside of a wrestling ring. Our best wishes to you, **Antonio**!...A new group promoting in the U.S. is called "Superpowers of Wrestling". It appears that they offer a combination of wrestling, karate, judo and sambo. The rules will be the same as a pro wrestling match, but there will be no gimmicks or theatrics. Hey, what is this, the early 1900s? How about **Frank Gotch** vs **George Hackenschmidt**? Anyway, there will be various teams from various countries competing. Representing the U.S. will be **Bam Bam Bigelow, Brad Rheingans, Buzz Sawyer, Leon White, Steve Williams** and former Olympic gold medalist, **Jeff Blatnick**, who, by the way, vehemently opposes pro wrestling. According the the promoters of the Superpowers show, they will have their shows on cable television sometime in may. The shows will be aired throughout the United States, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Sounds interesting. I'd really like to see it take off. There isn't much more news to tell except that there are two big guys with mohawk haircuts knocking at my front door. Uh-oh! Until next month, this is the Phantom signing off.

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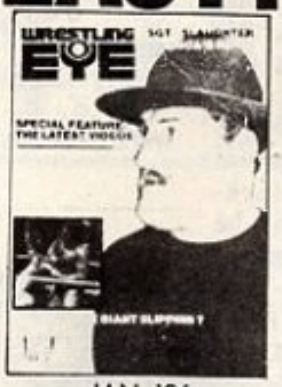

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NIKOLAI VOLKOFF

THE SAGA CONTINUES

BY DON LAIBLE

Nikolai and author Don Laible.

There have literally been scores of wrestlers from the Soviet Union who hit it big in North America. Unfortunately, for many, their careers have been short-lived and disappointing. After all, it takes more than just talk to last in American mat circles. However, Nikolai Volkoff has been an exception. After three decades of competing, most are still in awe at his systematic ability to wear down his opponents on a regular basis. And, there are no plans in Volkoff's immediate future for retirement. He's having too much fun. Since he is no longer bound to the WWF, the Soviet superstar is gleefully accepting all new challengers on the independent circuit.

Nikolai Volkoff wrestles because he wants to. The wealth he's accumulated over the years has left him and his family financially secure. The cartwheels and flying kneedrops off the ropes are just further proof that Volkoff is having a grand time in the ring. And, he's got to be glad to be away from the rigorous booking schedule the WWF adheres to. After all, when with the WWF, Volkoff was wrestling 28 out of 30 days every month. Telephone calls were his closest link to those he loved. And as hard it as it may seem to believe, the youthful-looking Nikolai is the proud father of a daughter who is a high school senior.

Although he took some time off before entering the independent rings, Volkoff did not forget the weight room. Pumping iron is his passion. "You couldn't get him to give up

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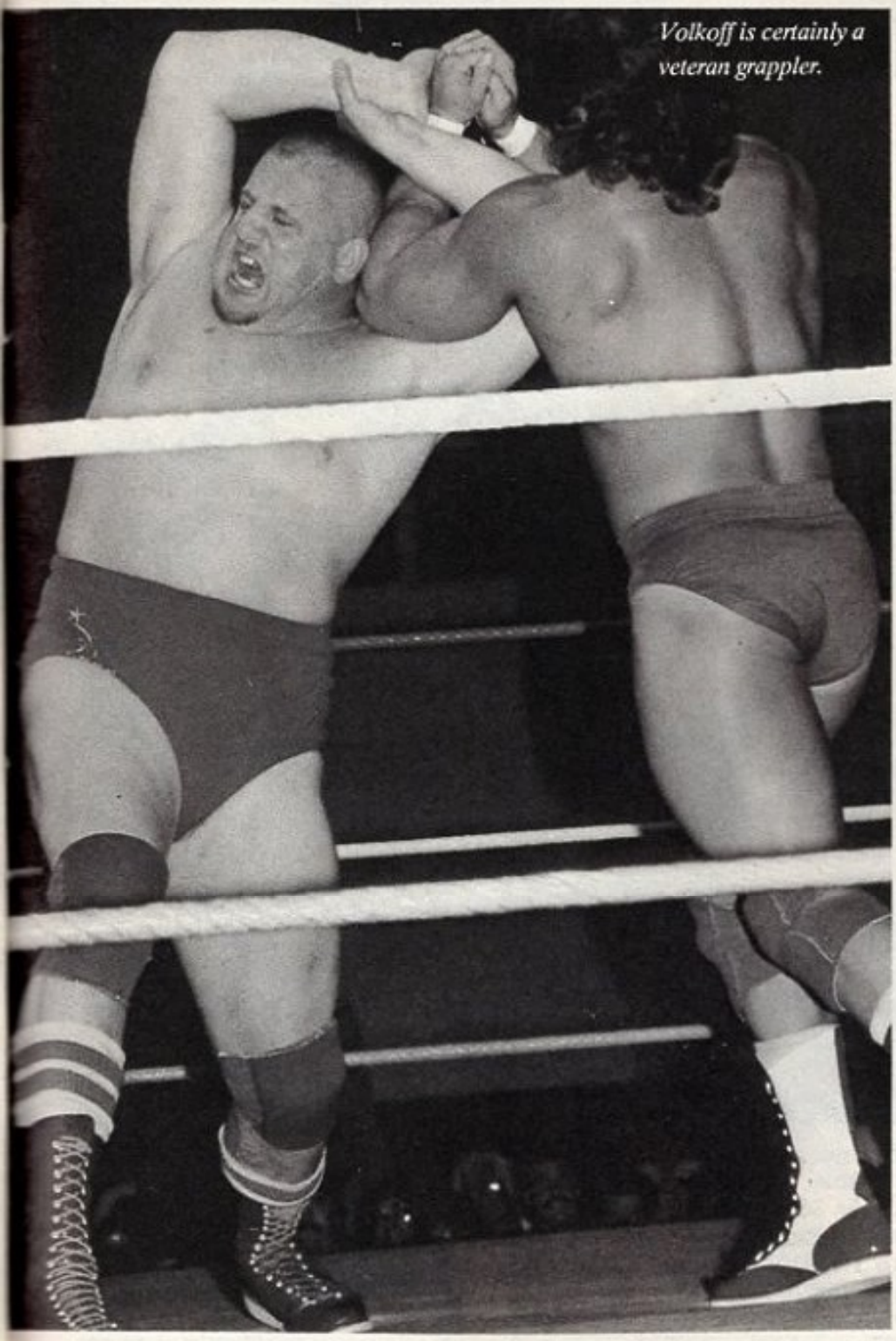


Volkoff is certainly a veteran grappler.

the weights," independent manager, Hubie Marx stated. "Most people aren't aware of the competitions and championships he and his father won in Yugoslavia and Russia. Just look at the size of his chest and you'll see that he's never missed an appointment with the gym."

Nikolai agrees to an average of two to four matches per week lately. But, even though he no longer appears on TV, don't consider him "washed up". This angers him even more than when he booed for singing the Russian national anthem in the ring. It's just that his career objectives have taken a change in direction.

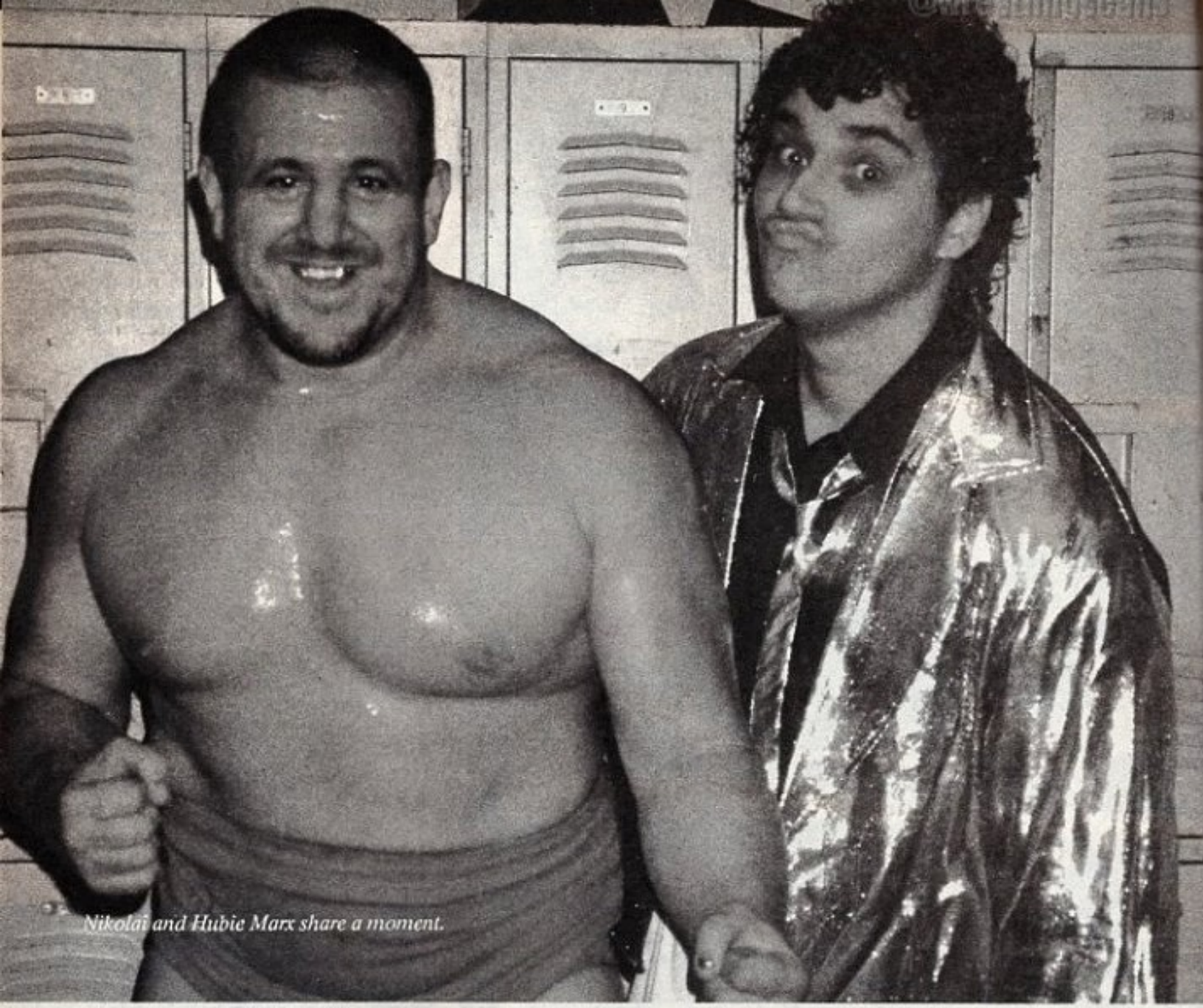
He's been called many names, most of them uncomplimentary by American mat fans, but perhaps Nikolai's greatest achievements came during the time he teamed with Boris Zuchov to form the Bolsheviks. Along with Slick as their manager, the Bolsheviks enjoyed two years of terrorizing many WWF fan favorites. Also, Volkoff teamed with the Iron Sheik for a time and under the tutelage of Freddie Blassie, they managed to grab the WWF tag team championship belts from Barry Windham and Mike Rotundo.

Throughout his seventeen years with the WWF, Volkoff was never "just one of the boys". He was a main ingredient in the organization's overall success. Nikolai made his debut in 1974 when he annihilated Gorilla Monsoon in an under two minute match-up. The following month, on March 4, 1974, the big Russian earned a title shot at then World Champion, Bruno Sammartino. It was an intense display of stamina and determination that ended in a one hour time limit draw. Volkoff then teamed with his manager Freddie Blassie to combat such great teams as Bruno Sammartino and Chief Jay Strongbow, as well as the duo of Tony Garea and Dean Ho.

Another little known fact about Nikolai's wrestling days is that in the mid 1970s he was the third masked Executioner from time to time. He filled in when one of the original two were injured or to even up the sides when another dependable body was needed.

Nikolai Volkoff has gone one-on-one with the greatest grapplers of the modern era. Bruno Sammartino and Bob Backlund are who he says rank as his two toughest opponents. With

The Russian is ready for action.



Nikolai and Hubie Marx share a moment.

Bruno long retired, Volkoff currently enjoys kicking his son, David Sammartino, around. Perhaps it is Volkoff's hope that if he embarrasses the Sammartino name enough, Bruno will come out of retirement for a challenge match.

Bob Backlund was a far more technically dangerous foe., since he didn't possess Bruno's brute strength. Volkoff proceeded much more cautiously with Backlund because of the ex-champ's celebrated collegiate background. Conditioning played a far more important when in the ring against Backlund.

Johnny Valiant and Killer Kowalski are two of Nikolai's closest associates. They get together frequently to discuss current affairs surrounding the wrestling world. Volkoff has visited Kowalski's wrestling school on many occasions and has even given lessons.

Nikolai is a true patriot. He's proud of the Soviet Union's advancements and he lets the fans know it. He loves to sing his national anthem to proclaim loyalty to his homeland as well as to sing in front of a crowd. When not lifting weights and wrestling as a youth, Nikolai took singing lessons and would have been an opera singer if he never entered the squared circle. It's not uncommon to hear Volkoff singing loud and clear in the dressing room before a match. It seems to be his way of getting pysched up for battle.

Nikolai Volkoff dreams of one day returning home with a heavyweight championship belt clasped secured around his waist. He just may be able to do it sooner than most realize because negotiations are currently underway calling for Larry Zbyszko to lay his AWA gold on the line against the big Russian.

For now though, Nikolai Volkoff remains the target of veterans and rookies alike. After all, Nikolai still has tremendous drawing power and any win over him still makes for headline news. However, now he is a position to relax yet still enjoy the fruits of his labor. Remember, wrestling is more than a profession, it's a passion for him, and it's something he intends to do for a long time to come.

EDITORS NOTE: *As of press time, Nikolai has signed a contract to return to WWF rings and to reform the Bolsheviks with Boris Zuchov. Many say they are both in top form and stand an excellent chance of capturing the WWF tag team titles.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEND ALL LETTERS TO:
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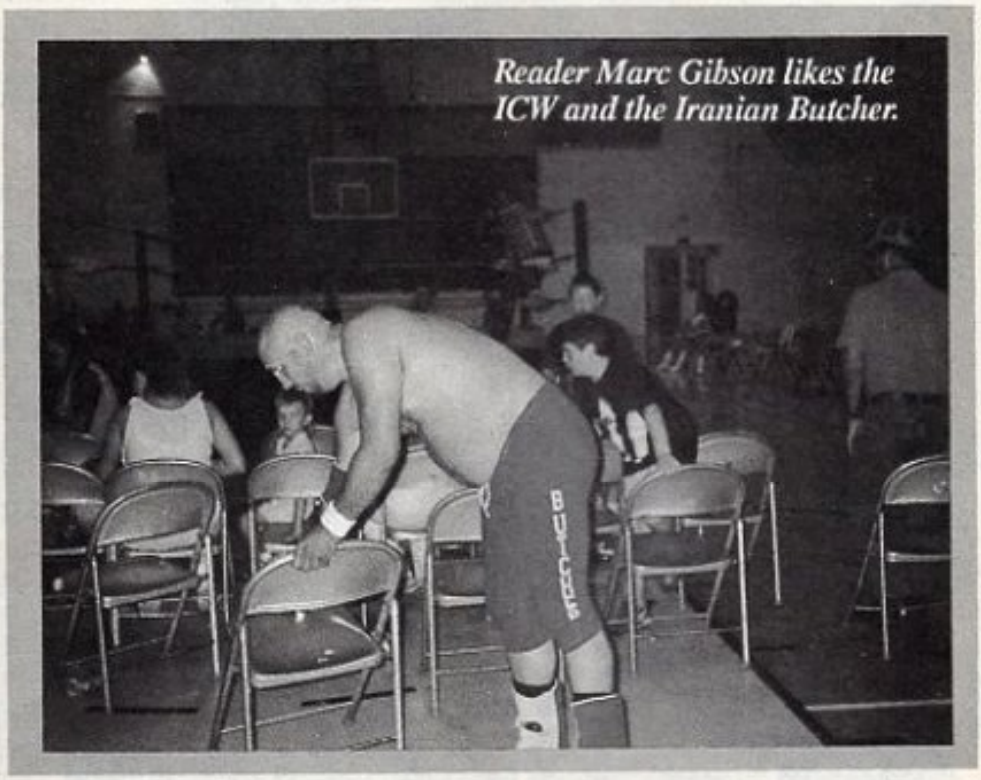
ATT: EDITOR

Dear WRESTLING EYE,

First of all, let me say that WRESTLING EYE magazine is one of the best wrestling magazines on the market today. However, I would like to see some more coverage on the ICW. There are a lot of wrestlers in the ICW who are just as good or better than men like Tom Brandi and I think they deserve as much recognition as him.

In the ICW, you will find Tony Atlas, who is the ICW Heavyweight Champion, Kendall Windham, The Iranian Butcher, Vic Steamboat and Joe Savoldi, just to name a few. I've enclosed some pictures of the Iranian Butcher. Maybe you could use them in your magazine. In the meantime, keep up the good work!

Marc Gibson
Bristol, Tn



Reader Marc Gibson likes the ICW and the Iranian Butcher.

Dear WRESTLING EYE,

Where Have All the Great Ones Gone? Well, I can tell you where one of them is - he is in Humboldt, Iowa. He came back to his home town when he died. The one I am writing about is none other than the great Frank Gotch. He even has a park named after him, called Gotch Park. Every now and then, the town holds a wrestling tournament for the young boys there. In fact, my nephew won the tournament one year!

Keep up the great work. I just love reading your magazine!

A Fan
Humboldt, Iowa

Dear WRESTLING EYE,

I am a big fan of the WWF. The NWA is good too, but they can't compare to the WWF. I usually root for the villains like Mr. Perfect, The Widowmaker and Rick Martel. Hulk (the poorest excuse for a wrestler) is champion for now, but that's only because he never defended the belt against Mr.Perfect. I think Perfect is the best wrestler in the entire WWF and I know that it's only a matter of time before he captures the gold.

The current Intercontinental champ, The Ultimate Warrior, is one of the few fan favorites that I like, but I think he will definitely become a rulebreaker soon. Then, either Dino Bravo, Rick Martel or the Widowmaker will dethrone him.

Demolition shouldn't be tag team champs. Tully Blanchard of the Brain Busters wasn't the legal man in the ring, but he was pinned anyway. I think the WWF should look at this bout more carefully and strip Demolition of the titles. The tag team belts should then be put up for grabs in a tournament. All the tag teams could then get a fair shot at the titles.

Joseph Puccio
Richmond Hill, NY

Dear WRESTLING EYE,

I just thought I would write and tell you that I loved all of the articles you've

@wrestlingfans

had on Sting in the past. He has to be the one man who is the most knock-down, drag-out, gorgeous thing in the world. Believe me, before I saw Sting, I used to hate wrestling. But now I'm hooked, and it's all because of him. So far, I've seen him wrestle twice in person and I thought I was going to have a fit each time, but I acted like a lady and controlled my emotions. One more thing, Sting, if you're reading this, I LOVE YOU!!!

Tabitha Edwards
McClure, Va

Dear WRESTLING EYE,

Your magazine is the best on the market. I finally wised up and subscribed. I've been a hardcore NWA fan for 19 years. I've seen wrestling publications come and go. This one looks like it's here to stay. The Phantom of the Ring keeps me waiting in anticipation each month.

Now, is it my imagination or does it seem like the NWA's talent roster is as deep or maybe deeper than the WWF's? It also seems a shame that the NWA is taking for granted such outstanding talent like Dr. Death, Mike Rotundo and the Midnight Express.

Note to the NWA: Don't try to copy the WWF. Keep the talent coming in but use them wisely. The NWA and WRESTLING EYE will rule the 90s!

Steve Campbell
USMCAS Beaufort, SC

Dear WRESTLING EYE,

Your magazine is the greatest! I would like to say that Bobby Fulton is my favorite wrestler. THis eye-popping cutie is an undeniable knockout! In my opinion, he's the most gorgeous guy in wrestling. He has the looks to drive me absolutely wild! I just love his blonde hair and his beautiful brown eyes. I always cheer when I see him wrestle. I sure do wish he'd come back to the U.S.W.A. area. I like the ways he's so nice to his fans. I would also like to see more color photos of him. Keep up the good work.

Appolonia M.
Ft. Worth, Tx

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DOUBLE TEAMED!!
MISTY BLUE & HEIDI LEE TAKE ON LINDA DALLAS & KAT LEROUX

Kat takes control of Heidi.

Heidi Lee stretches Linda Dallas.

Leroux wants Heidi Lee's arm!

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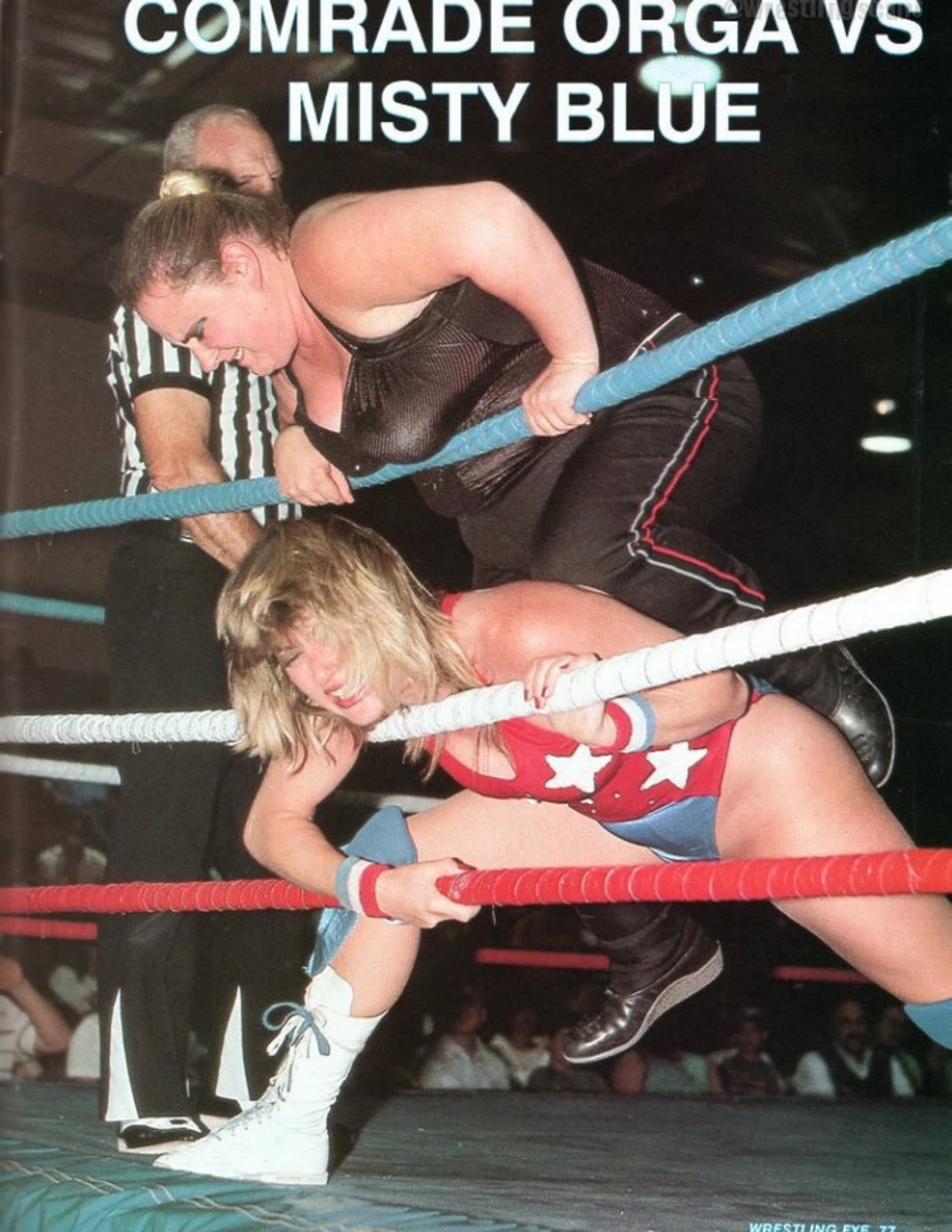
Misty Blue puts Linda Dallas in her place!

Both teams battled for twenty minutes. Heidi and Misty were victorious.

COMRADE ORGA VS MISTY BLUE



HONKY TONK MAN

MIKE ROTUNDO

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TOMMY RICH

PHOTO BY DON LAIBLE

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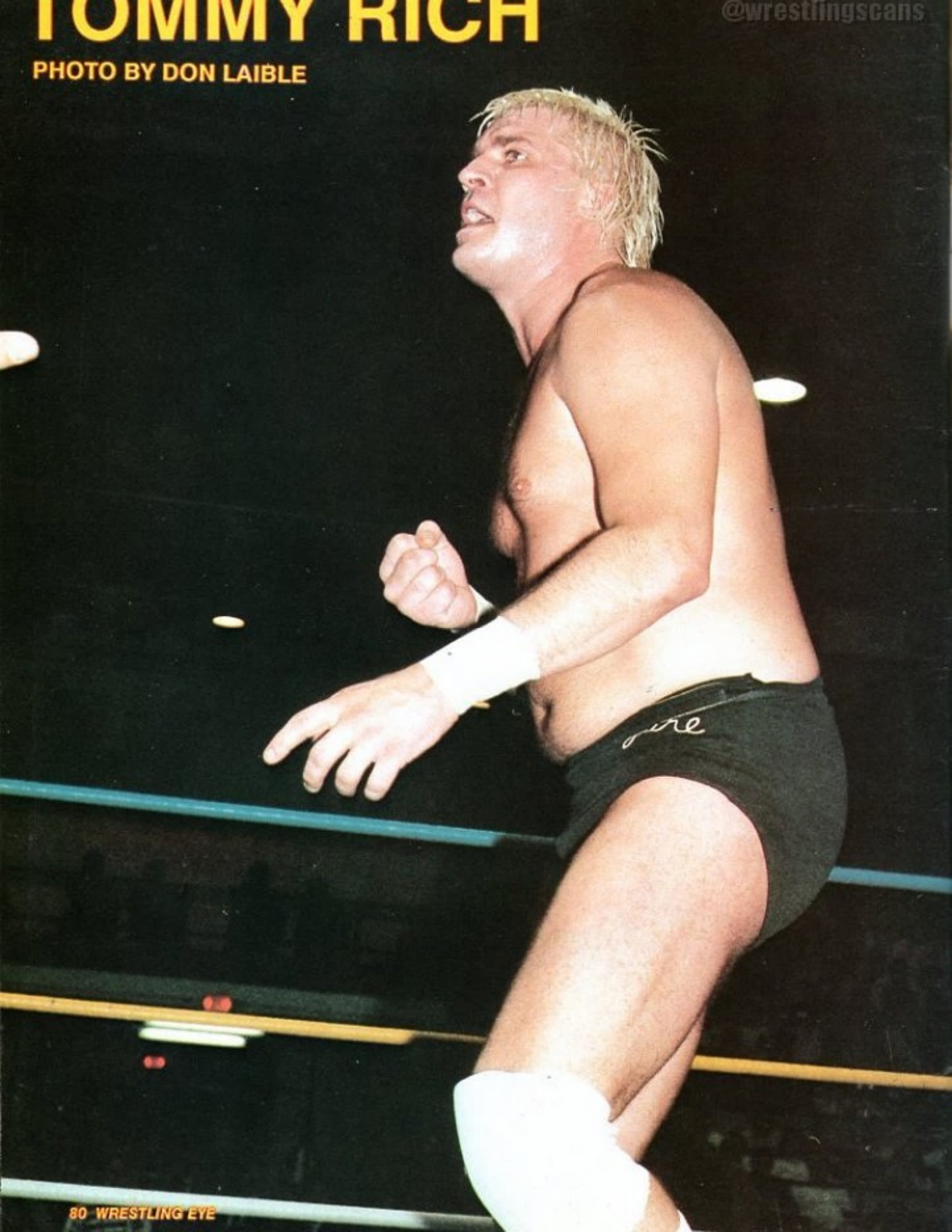

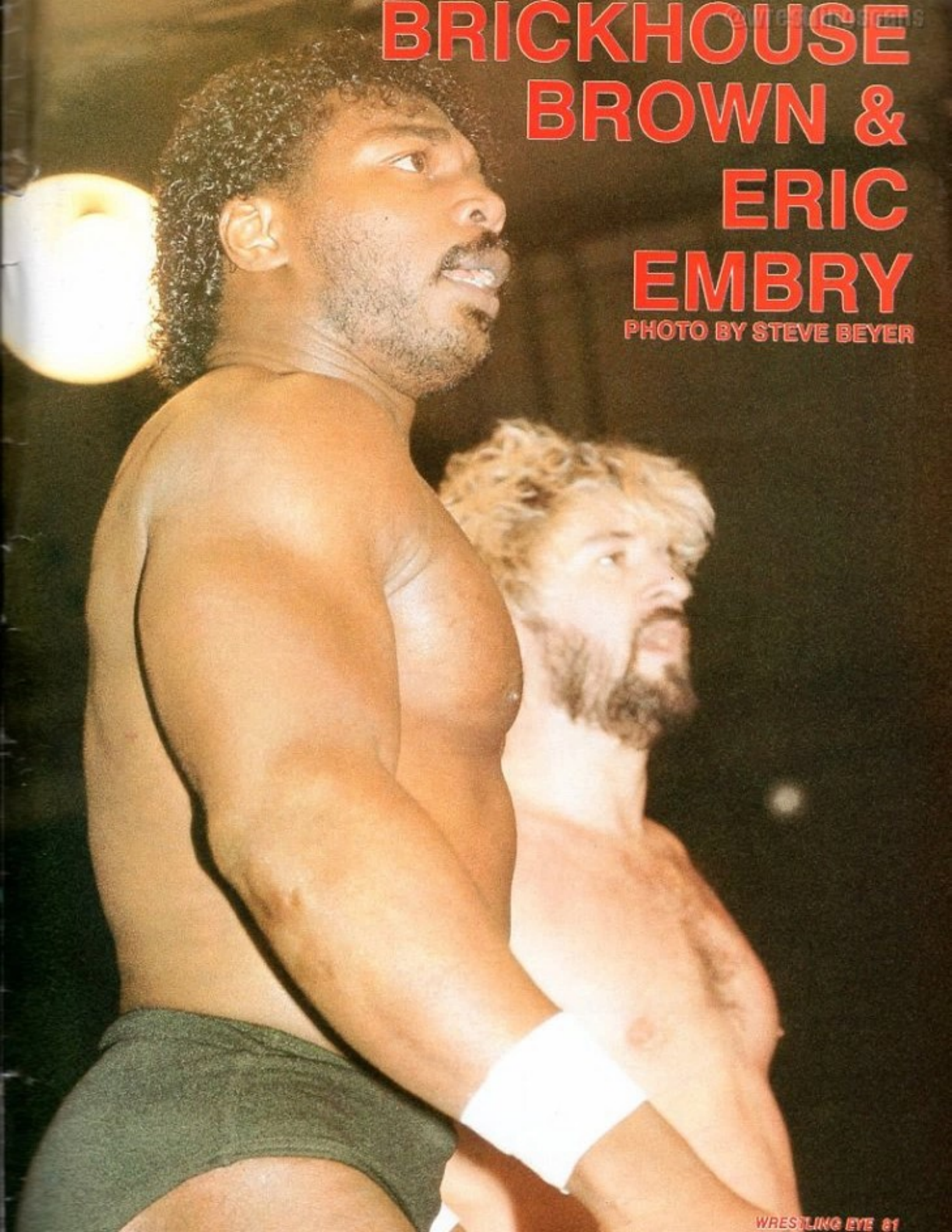

BRICKHOUSE BROWN & ERIC EMBRY

PHOTO BY STEVE BEYER